BUSES IN BENFLEET

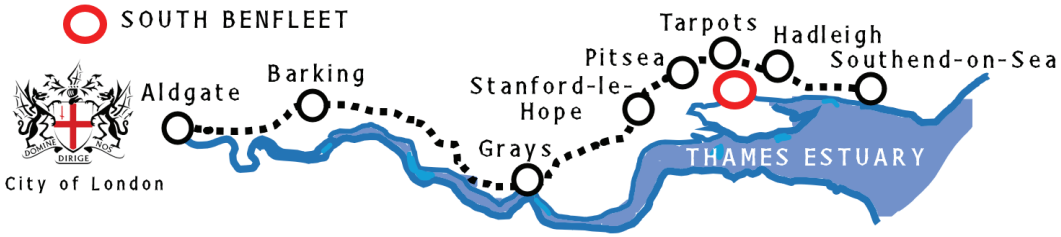
AN HISTORICAL REVIEW 1912-1955

This is an historical review of the bus services in the Benfleet area between 1912 and 1955.

STAGE COACHES

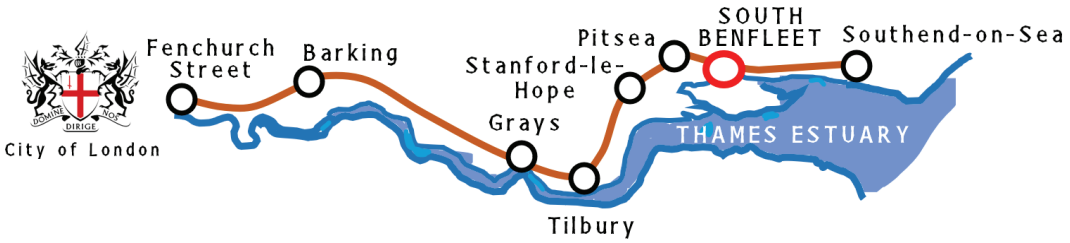
Below is a map of the stage coach services operating in South East Essex, UK, in 1848, before the construction of the London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway. The service ran along London Road and Kiln Road through Hadleigh, Thundersley and Tarpots Corner, **but not South Benfleet.**

In 1819, it was reported that "The Blue Boar Cellar", Aldgate, was the departure point for stage coaches to Southend -on-Sea.

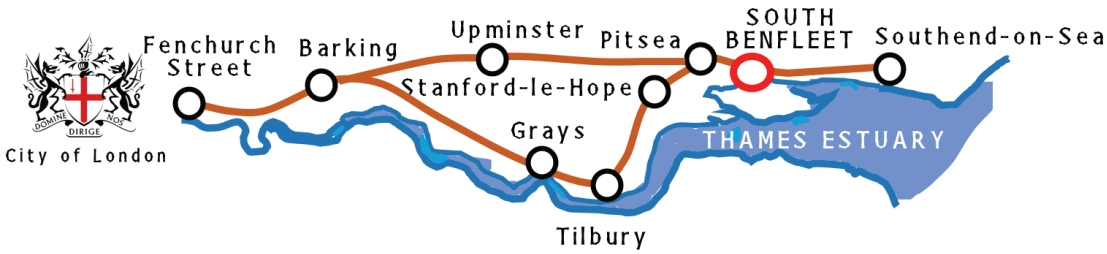


RAILWAYS

The London, Tilbury and Southend Railway opened on the 16th of May 1856, and followed a similar route to that of the stage coaches.



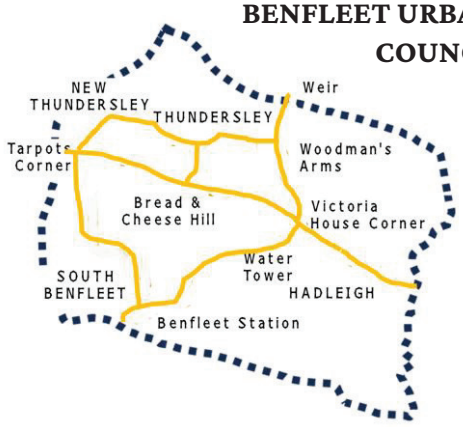
In June 1888, a new line opened between Barking and Pitsea via Upminster and Laindon.



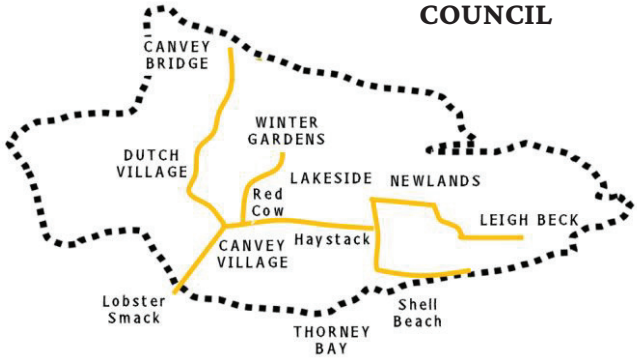
LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local Government had a direct impact on the development of bus services to Benfleet, as it had the responsibility of licensing horse and motor buses as well as taxi cabs in their respective boundaries.
The largest council area in South East Essex up to 1926, was the Rochford Rural District Council (RRDC). In 1897 the Parish of Leigh on Sea was removed from the RRDC to create the Leigh-on-Sea Urban District Council which, in turn, was absorbed into the Borough of Southend in 1913. In 1925, the Parish of Canvey Island was removed from the RRDC to form the Canvey Island Urban District Council.
In 1929 the parishes of Hadleigh, South Benfleet and Thundersley were removed from the RRDC to create the Benfleet Urban District Council, at the same time the parishes of Rayleigh and Rawreth were removed from the RRDC to create the Rayleigh Urban District Council.

BENFLEET URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



CANVEY URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL



REGULATIONS

Since the introduction of the **Town Police Clauses Acts** of 1847 and 1889, omnibus services have been regulated. Regulation by this legislation was by a licence issued by the appropriate local government in which the service commenced and terminated. The licence stipulated several requirements including the road worthiness of the vehicle used and the route to be traversed.

Until the formation of the Canvey Urban District Council in 1926, and the Benfleet Urban District Council in 1929, the Parishes of Canvey and South Benfleet, were in the Rochford Rural District Council area which was responsible for issuing Hackney Carriage Licences and Licences under the **Town Police Clauses Acts.**

WAGGONETTES

With the passing of the ***Locomotives on Highways Act*** in 1896, motorised and steam driven wagonettes were gradually introduced in Great Britain. They were lightly constructed and, unlike a bus (horse or motor), had limited seating capacity. They were often used to operate "feeder" services between a railway station and a nearby village or town.

The only example of a motorised wagonette service in the Benfleet area, was one started in 1908, by Henry Sefton, who ran a regular service between Hadleigh Church and Leigh-on-Sea Church, to connect with the electric trams to Southend-on-Sea. **There was no waggonette service to Benfleet railway station**.

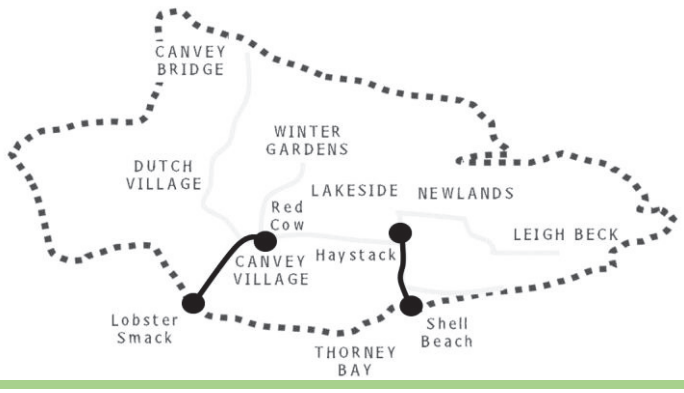
HORSEPOWER

There are no records of any horse buses operating in the Benfleet area.

However, in 1901, on Canvey Island, a horse drawn monorail was operated by Fredrick Hester from the ferry at Benfleet Creek to Shell Beach. Its purpose was to transfer potential buyers of plots of land that Hester was promoting as a "seaside resort" for East Londoners known as the "Winter Gardens". Unfortunately, occasional high tides flooded some of the "desirable plots" and interest in the land waned. Hester declared bankruptcy on the 1st of April 1905.

Other horse bus services on Canvey Island included a horse drawn Hackney Carriage (taxi) which, although unlicensed, operated on a seasonal basis from 1925 until 1943 between Benfleet Station and "The Haystack". Other licensed horse wagons operated during the same period from the Pump at Canvey Village to the "Lobster Smack" at Hole Haven and to Shell Beach from "The Haystack".

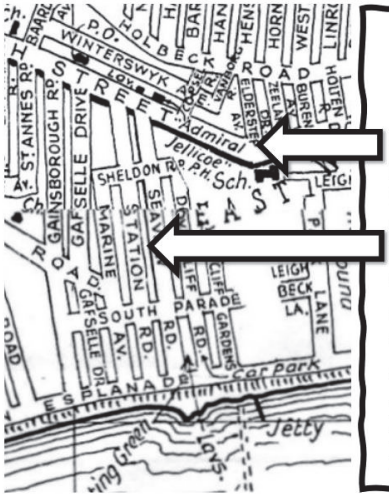
From 1945 until 1948, the Canvey Urban District Council had licenced a number of horse wagons to be used as buses to operate in summer months for the benefit of day trippers. None of these services went to Benfleet Station, instead concentrating on the "Haystack" to Beach route and the "Red Cow" to the "Lobster Smack" route.



ELECTRIC TRAMWAYS

As part of his residential development at the location he named "The Winter Gardens", Fredrick Hester promoted an electric tramway on Canvey Island and although one tramcar was delivered, no track was laid.

The scheme failed, with the 4 tramcars ordered left on the makers hands, when Fredrick Hester was declared bankruptcy on the 1st of April 1905, after a high spring tide flooded his land plots resulting in a drop in demand and therefore sales.



TERMINUS HOTEL AND STATION ROAD CANVEY ISLAND

Built in the early 1930's, the "Admiral Jellicoe" replaced the "Terminus Hotel" which was thought to be named after the proposed terminus of an electric tramway which was promoted in 1901. Until the tramway was built, a "monorail" operation with one "car" drawn by a horse, covered part of the proposed route until the whole scheme went into liquidation after a few months.

The possibility of a station in the location for the proposed tramway was confirmed by the road near the "Admiral Jellicoe" being named Station Road.

THE FIRST BUS SERVICES IN THE BENFLEET AREA

The first bus services to operate in the Benfleet area did not travel to South Benfleet, but instead served Hadleigh, Thundersley and Rayleigh.

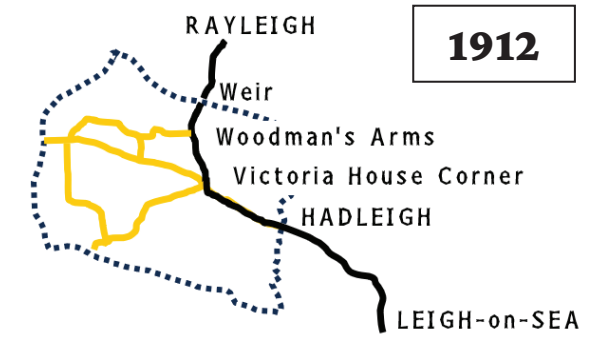
In 1912, the **Hadleigh Motor Bus Company Ltd**, ran a service from Hadleigh to Leigh-on-Sea. Also, in 1912, a bus service operated between Leigh-on Sea, Hadleigh and Rayleigh by the **Leigh, Hadleigh and Rayleigh Omnibus Co.**

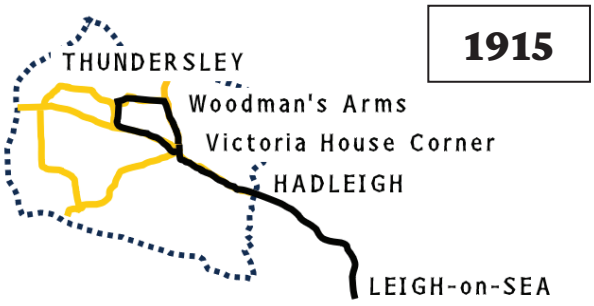
Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Motors was registered in 1915 and operated a bus service from Leigh-on-Sea to Hadleigh and then Thundersley by a circular route.

As both services operated to Leigh-on-Sea which was a Parish in the Borough of Southend*, the operators had to apply for licences to operated, as required by the Town Police Clauses Acts of 1847 and 1889 which was administered by the Southend Watch Committee.

The Rochford Rural District Council did not issue licences for the portion of the services that ran through its district, as it had the option not to do so.

****County Borough from 1914.***

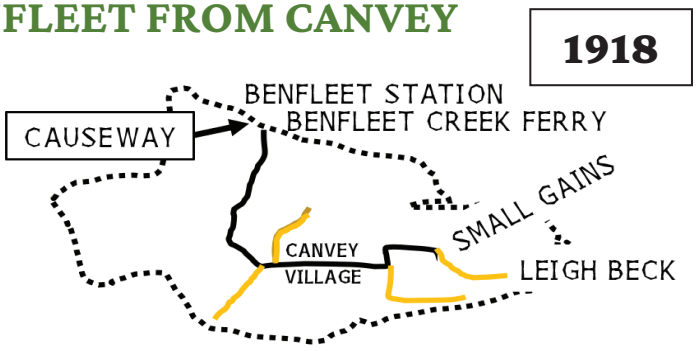




THE FIRST BUS SERVICES TO BENFLEET FROM CANVEY

It was reported that in 1918, after the First World War, a number of Canvey Island individuals with passenger carrying motor vehicles, many converted from ex-army ambulances, commenced services from the island to the Benfleet Creek Ferry, and at low tide, crossed the causeway to Benfleet Station.

These services were un-licensed as the Rochford Rural District Council did not issue omnibus licences at this time as they felt there was no need for such.

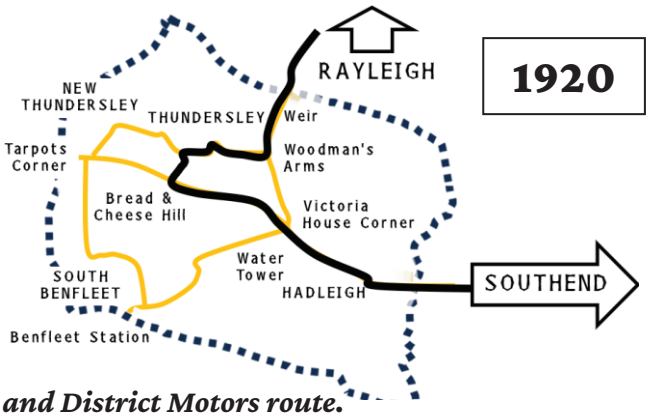


CANVEY ISLAND MOTOR ASSOCIATION

In 1919, a number of the Canvey bus operators decided to form an association named the **Canvey Island Motor Association,** with the purpose of coordinating timetables and regulating fares.

THE WESTCLIFF on SEA MOTOR CHAR-A-BANC COMPANY

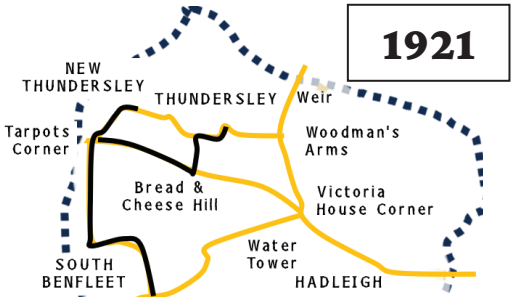
This company was formed on the 23rd of April 1914.
In April 1920, the company applied to the Southend - on-Sea Borough Council to operate a number of bus services in the Southend area, one of which was from Southend to Rayleigh via Hadleigh and Thundersley. An omnibus licence was granted by the Southend Watch Committee and the service commenced on the 19th of July 1920 as route 1 and as of November 2023, has remained virtually unchanged for over 100 years.



This route duplicated part of the Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Motors route.

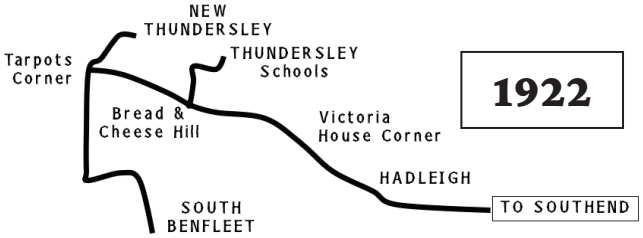
THE FIRST BUS SERVICE FROM SOUTH BENFLEET TO THUNDERSLEY

In 1921, Major Pearce commenced a bus service from Benfleet station to Thundersley and New Thundersley for the benefit of commuters.



THE FIRST BUS SERVICE FROM SOUTH BENFLEET TO SOUTHEND

In 1922, Major Pearce as Pearce's Motor Services, obtained a licence to operate a service from South Benfleet to Southend and a few years later, he ran services to Stanford-Le-Hope, Brentwood, and Wickford.

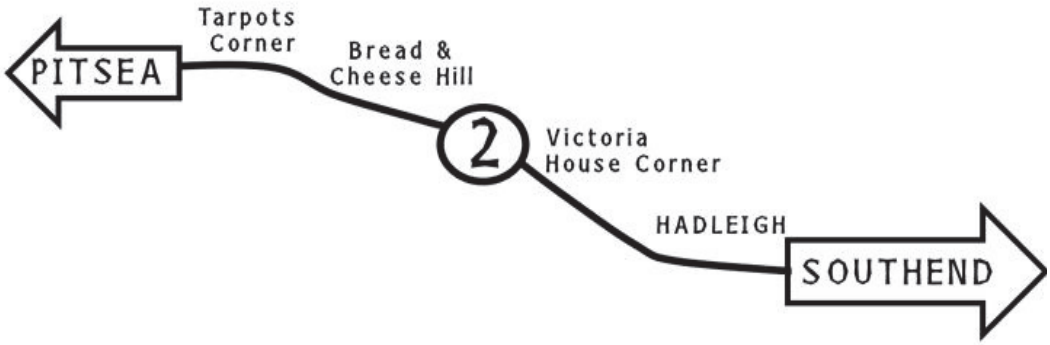


CHANGE OF NAME

On the 22nd of January 1922, the name **"**Westcliff-on-Sea Char-a-banc Company" was changed to the "Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd".

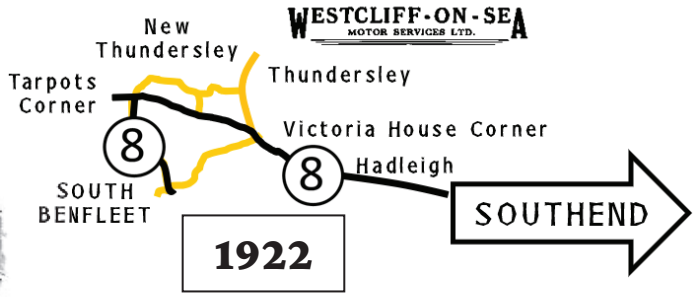
THE WESTCLIFF on SEA MOTOR SERVICES RESPONSE

In response to Pearce's Motor Services operating to Southend over a substantial part of its route to Rayleigh, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Company in January 1922, obtained, a licence to operate a service from Southend to Pitsea which it numbered route 2. **This was extended to Vange by December 1922.**



WESTCLIFF GOES TO BENFLEET

In the summer of 1922, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Company obtained a licence to operate a service from Southend to South Benfleet following the same route in competition with the blue charabancs of Pearse's Motor Services. Like Pearse's buses, Westcliff's service ran every 2 hours. It was numbered route 8 but was **renumbered as rout 3 in December 1922** as part of the Westcliff Motor Services route renumbering programme.



1922

Renumbered as rout 3 in December 1922

Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services used Daimler K type buses for the Benfleet route similar to the one in this illustration.

SUMMER SERVICE TO BRENTWOOD VIA HADLEIGH

Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Company obtained a licence to operate a twice daily summer service from 1922 between Southend Brentwood using the London Road and Kiln Road via Hadleigh, Victoria House Corner, Bread and Cheese Hill and Tarpots Corner.

ROCHFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL ISSUES LICENCES

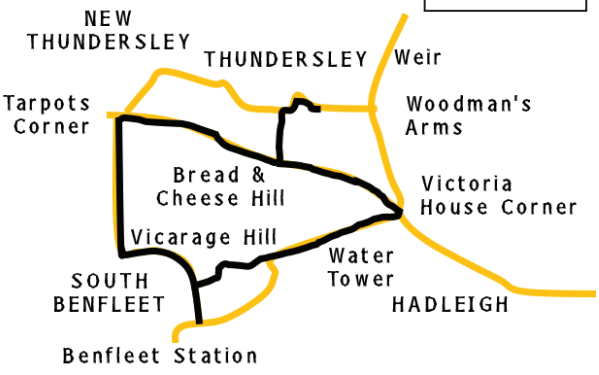
The Canvey Island Motor Association published a timetable in 1922 for its service from Leigh Beck at Small Gains Corner and Benfleet Station. However, the licensed Hackney Carriages owners on the Island disrupted the timetable by offering competitive services. This led to the Rochford Rural District Council creating Omnibus By-Laws under the **Town Police Clauses Acts** which applied to both buses and taxis operating on Canvey Island and in Benfleet.

OMNIBUS AND TAXI LICENCE PLATES ISSUED BY ROCHFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL IN 1923
Pearce's Motor Services received 3 plates, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Company received 2 plates and the Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Motors received 1 plate. Individuals received the remainder of the 26 omnibus plates issued.

PEARCE'S CIRCULAR SERVICE FROM SOUTH BENFLEET TO THUNDERSLEY

1923

In 1923, Pearce's Motor Services provided 2 return weekday circular services via Vicarage Hill, Benfleet Road, the Water Tower, and Victoria House Corner.

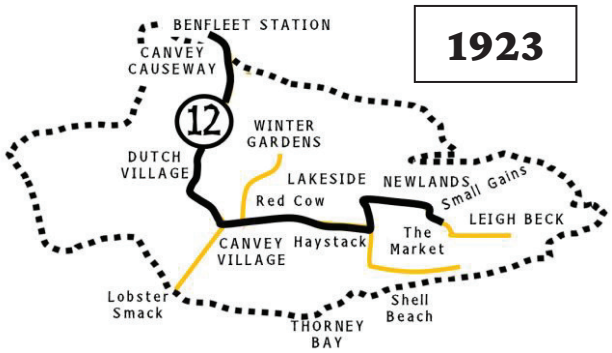


The 10.00 am service from South Benfleet to Thundersley Schools went via Tarpots Corner and Bread and Cheese Hill and completed a circular service by returning to South Benfleet via Kiln Road, Victoria House Corner, the Water Tower, and Vicarage Hill.

The 11.10 am weekday service from South Benfleet ran via Vicarage Hill, the Water Tower, Victoria House Corner and Kiln Road to return as a circular service to South Benfleet via Bread and Cheese Hill and Tarpots Corner.

WESTCLIFF on SEA MOTOR SERVICES ON CANVEY ISLAND

The directors of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, on learning about the introduction of omnibus licences to the Canvey Island operators, decided that operational stability may result amongst the various bus operators on the island, so they decided to apply for a licence to operate a service from Leigh Beck Market to South Benfleet Station subject to the tides. The service was numbered 12 and commenced on the 8th of June 1923 and extended beyond the Canvey Island Motor Association Small Gains terminus to "The Market" shops.



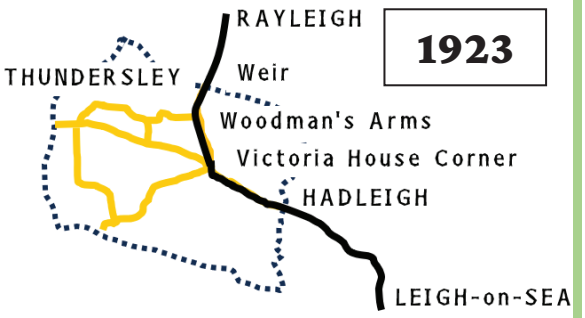
THE BRIDGE FAMILY AND THEIR BUSES

The Bridge family, led by Henry Ritchie Bridge (1875–1955), were successful builders based in Leigh-on-Sea and became involved in bus services when they provided their own bus service to their new estate at Edward Hall in Eastwood, when the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services refused to provide the required service to the new residential area.

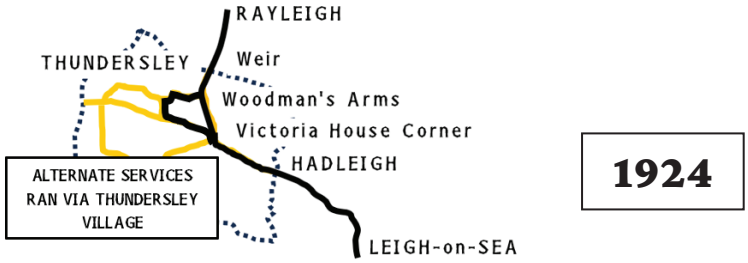
An existing operator that held a licence to run 4 return journeys on Mondays to Saturdays from Eastwood to Leigh-on-Sea, decided to relinquish it, and the Bridge family obtained approval from the Southend Watch Committee to hold the licence and operate the service from the 11th of December 1923, which was extended to Rayleigh.

The Bridge family formed Edwad Hall Motors Limited to operate the bus service and bought two new 26 seat single deck Vulcan buses for the service and painted them in a blue livery, which lead to the service being known as "The Blue Buses".

With the arrival of the second of the two Vulcans, on the 22nd of January 1923, the route was extended from Rayleigh to Leigh-on-Sea via Hadleigh, **so servicing the Benfleet area.**



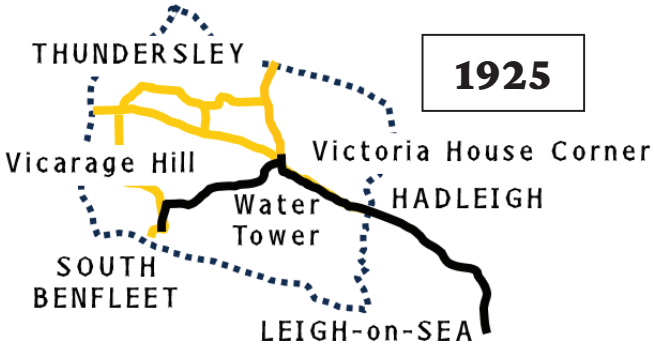
By mid-April 1924, the Blue Buses had 3 more buses on the road and more routes were operated in the Eastwood and Southend areas. **The service from Rayleigh to Leigh-on-Sea alternatively ran via Thundersley Village and schools.**



This extension duplicated part of Pearce's Motor Service route, Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Motors route and that of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services.

In October 1925, Edward Hall Motors commenced a direct service from Leigh Church to South Benfleet via Hadleigh, Victoria House Corner, Benfleet Road, and Vicarage Hill. ***This was a partial duplicate of Pearce's Motor Service route.***

In 1926, Edward Hall Motors ordered six new Daimler buses to strengthen the Benfleet and other routes.



1927 - EDWARD HALL MOTORS SELLS OUT TO WESTCLIFF -ON-SEA MOTOR SERVICES

The competition between "The Blue Buses" and Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services continued until both realised it would be better to amalgamate to fight off common competition, than to fight each other. On the 5th of March 1927, Edward Hall Motors became a subsidiary of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services with Henry Ritchie Bridge and his eldest son, H. A. Bridge, gained seats on the Westcliff Board.

1932 - HENRY RITCHIE BRIDGE RESIGNS FROM THE WESTCLIFF BOARD

Years of animosity between some Board Members of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services and H.R. Bridge cumulated in the resignation of Mr. Bridge, when new Board Members were appointed. He resigned his seat on the 23rd of March 1932. His son, H. A. Bridge, was forced to resign from the Board on the 21st of November 1932 when it was discovered H.R. Bridge was negotiating for the purchase of the rival business of Pearce's Motor Services in breach of a restrictive covenant made on the 25th of March 1927.

1932 – BENFLEET AND DISTRICT MOTOR SERVICES

Having bought the business off Major Pearce, Henry Ritchie Bridge with H. A. Bridge, formed the Benfleet and District Motor Services on the 29th of October 1932 and was joined by his other sons, Stanley, and Norman, in the business. Three new double decker buses were purchased to provide a half hour frequency on the South Benfleet to Southend-on-Sea service, which it shared with Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services which held a separate licence.

1934- THE BRIDGE FAMILY BUY CANVEY AND DISTRICT

In 1919, the various individual operators of buses on Canvey Island formed the Canvey Island Motor Association and in 1926, eight of those operators formed a combine to run regular services on the island to South Benfleet. In July of the same year, following the establishment of the Canvey Urban District Council, seventeen operators formed the "Associated Omnibus Owners of Canvey Island". With the introduction of the 1930 Road Traffic Act in April 1931, the Traffic Commissioners, who now issued licences, did not wish to license 15 operators for the 3-mile route through Canvey Island, so the operators formed "Canvey Auxiliary Motors" to operate the services on the route under one licence. However, the operators agreed it was best to become a limited company, so on the 29th of October 1931, the Canvey Auxiliary Motors business was absorbed into The Canvey & District Motor Transport Company Ltd.

Henry Ritchie Bridge having been successful in operating Benfleet and District Motor Services as a profitable enterprise, decided in 1934, to try and acquire the Canvey & District Motor Transport Company Ltd, but his attempt was thwarted, so he tried to buy shares on a piecemeal basis, approaching each shareholder in turn and by the 1934 Annual Geneal Meeting, Henry Bridge had gained control of the company.

Canvey & District Motor Transport Company built an "Art Deco" style garage at Leigh Beck that has since become the home of the Canvey Island Transport Museum and has been selected for a model kit by Kingsway Models.

The Kingsway Models kit representing the Canvey & District Motor Transport Company garage when owned by its last operator – the Natioal Bus Company

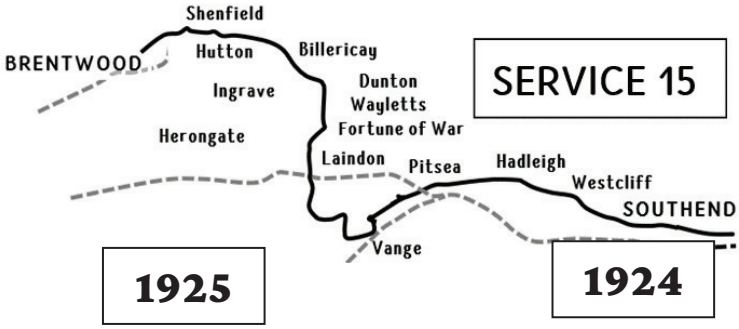
1951-THE BRIDGE FAMILY SELLS TO THE BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION

Prior to the **Transport Act of 1985**, that deregulated the bus industry, the **Transport Act of 1947** nationalised transport services in the United Kingdom including all bus services and the railways. Although the railways were nationalised under this Act, no bus services were "compulsory purchased" by the nationalised British Transport Commission (BTC), even though many of the railway companies had up to a 50% ownership in some bus companies, most of which were part of the Tilling Group. In 1949, the Tilling Group sold out to the British Transport Commission so those bus companies where 50% of ownership was held by the State, became 100% State owned.

The Bridge family decided to sell their operations of Benfleet and District Motor Services and the Canvey Motor Transport Company to the British Transport Commission (B.T.C.) which allocated the operations to the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services on the 2nd of March 1951. As Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services already operated the route 3 service from South Benfleet to Southend, the Benfleet, and District Motor Services timings on their service 3 were incorporated into Westcliff's o provide a 15-minute frequency.

SOUTHEND TO BRENTWOOD VIA HADLEIGH AND TARPOTS

In the summer of 1924, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Southend-on-Sea to Brentwood service was numbered 15 and re-routed via Shenfield, Hutton, Billericay, and Noak Hill. ***However, In the summer of 1925, Service 15 was again re-routed via Herongate.***



CANVEY ISLAND HAS "FIFTY BUS OPERATORS"

A report given to the Urban District of Canvey Island in 1925, indicated there were 50 motor bus operators servicing the 3 mile "Main Road" on Canvey Island from Leigh Beck Farm to Benfleet Station (via Benfleet Creek causeway) which equates to the number of Hackney Carriage Licences issued in 1923 by the Rochford Rural District Council.

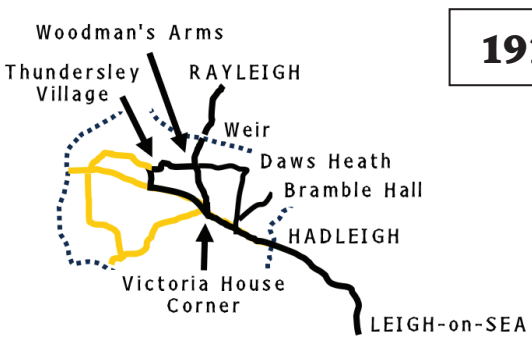
WESTCLIFF CEASES OPERATIONS ON CANVEY ISLAND

In the Autumn of 1924, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services decided to cease operations on Canvey Island due to the competition from the local bus operators. The service number 12 was now available for re-allocation.

"BLUE BUSES" SERVICES THROUGH HADLEIGH TO RAYLEIGH

In October 1925, "The Blue Buses" of Edward Hall Motors introduced a number of services from Leigh-on-Sea passing through Hadleigh and Victoria House Corner. These were the routes, and they were all un- numbered.:

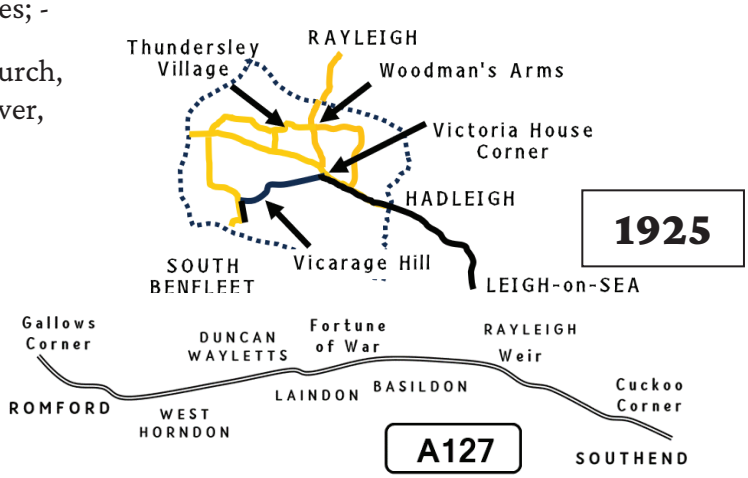
- Leigh Church to Rayleigh via Hadleigh Church, Daws Heath, Bramble Hall, the "Woodman's Arms" and the Weir.
- Leigh Church to Rayleigh via Hadleigh Church, Victora House Corner, the "Woodman's Arms" and the Weir.
- Leigh Church to Rayleigh via Hadleigh Church, Victora House Corner, Kiln Road, Keneth Road, Thundersley Village, , the "Woodman's Arms" and the Weir.



"BLUE BUSES" SERVICE THROUGH HADLEIGH TO BENFLEET

Also in October 1925, "The Blue Buses" of Edward Hall Motors introduced a service from Leigh -on-Sea to South Benfleet in competition with Pearce's Motor Services; -

- Leigh Church to South Benfleet via Hadleigh Church, Victora House Corner, Benfleet Road, Water Tower, and Vicarage Hill.

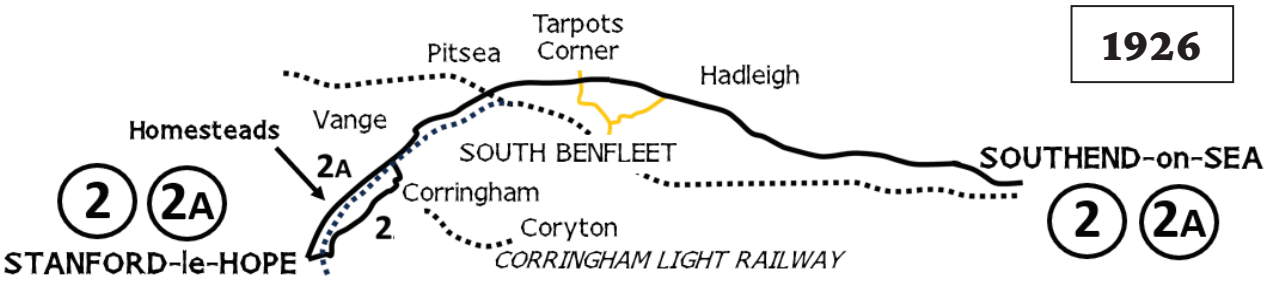


SOUTHEND ARTERIAL ROAD

Although not in the Benfleet Urban District Council Area, buses from South Benfleet to Wickford used this new road. It opened in stages between June and September 1924. In 1936 it was duplicated and had cycleways in each direction. Some say the Nazi's Autobahns were modelled on this road.

BUSES TO STANFORD-le-HOPE VIA HADLEIGH AND TARPOTS

During 1926, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services extended the service 2 from the Barge Inn, Vange to the Five Bells at Vange. A new service from Southend to Stanford-le-Hope via Homesteads was introduced as number 2A.

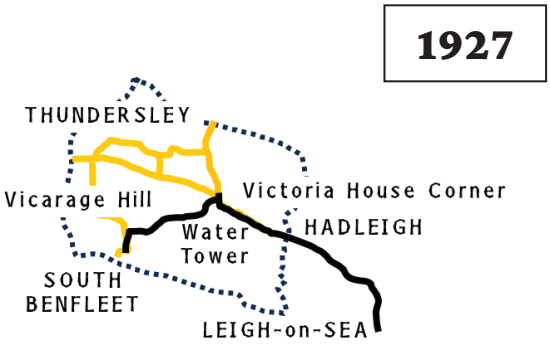


EDWARD HALL MOTORS BECOMES A WESTCLIFF-on-SEA MOTOR SERVICES SUBSIDUARY

When the Southend Borough Council Watch Committee issued 12 licences under the **Town Police Clauses Acts** to Edward Hall Motors which included services from Southend to Rochford, Paglesham, Rayleigh, Eastwood, Ashingdon, Great Wakering and Hockley, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services decided to invite the former to hold discussions on the future of bus services in the area. Subsequently, on the **25th of March 1927, Edward Hall Motors becomes a fully owned subsidiary of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services**

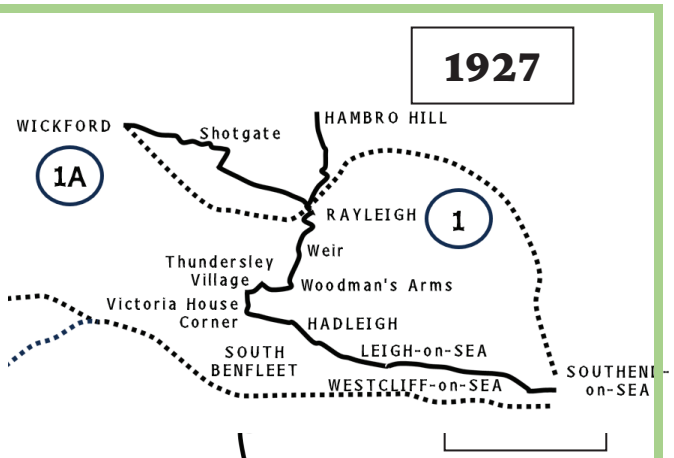
SERVICE VIA VICARAGE HILL BECOMES WESTCLIFF 3A

H.R. Bridge's "Blue Buses" became a subsidiary of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services on the 25th of March 1927, and its services continued to operate under the "The Blue Buses" fleet name, but changes were made to some services and those of the Westcliff company to reduced duplication and improve efficiency. ***As "The Blue Buses" did not have service numbers, the service to Benfleet via Vicarage Hill was transferred to Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services and was allocated service number 3A.***



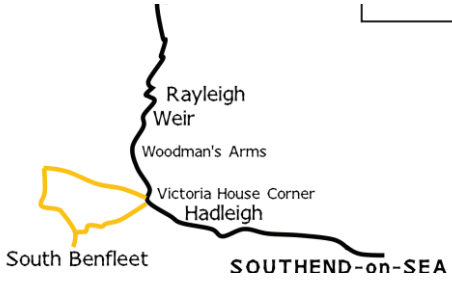
BUSES FROM HADLEIGH TO HAMBRO HILL AND WICKFORD

In 1927, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services extended some journeys of route 1 to service Hambro Hill and then withdrew them to provide an extended service to Wickford as service 1A.



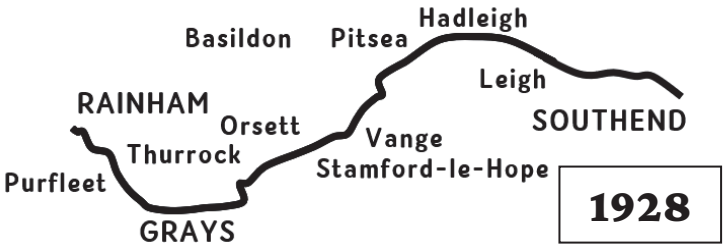
SERVICE FROM HADLEIGH AND THUNDERSLEY TO HULLBRIDGE

In 1928, all services from Hullbridge and Hambro Hill operated by "The Blue Buses" were diverted to run via Leigh-Elms Hotel, Hadleigh and Victoria House Corner.



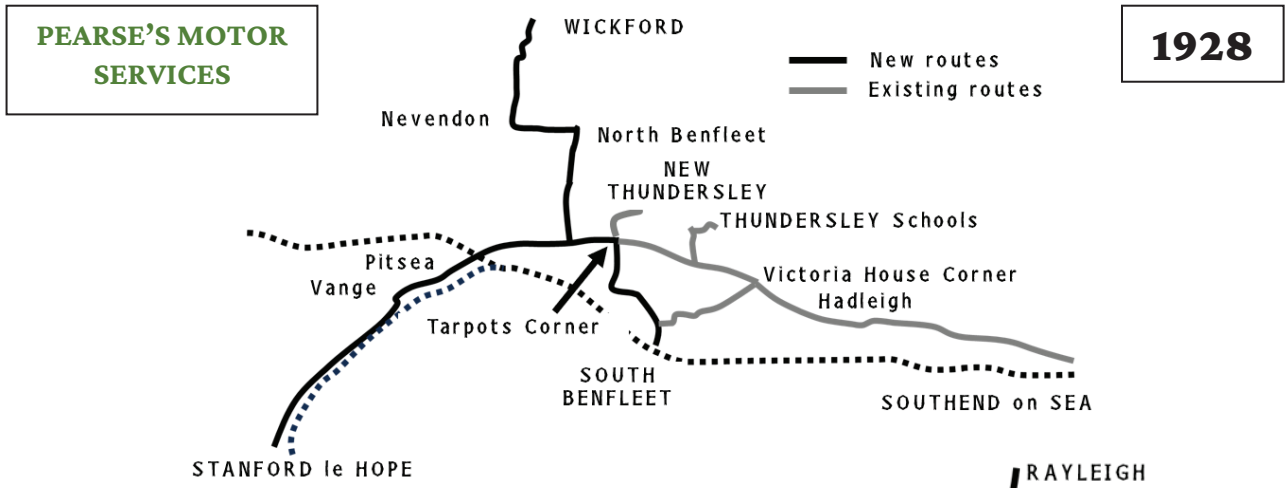
NEW SERVICE TO GRAYS VIA HADLEIGH AND TARPOTS

On the 23rd of September 1928, **Borough Motor Services**, of Southend-on-Sea, received approval to operate one bus between Southend, Grays and Rainham, ***but only the section from Southend to Grays was operated.***



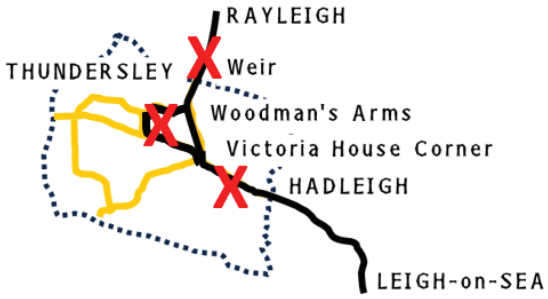
PEARSE'S MOTOR SERVICES - NEW ROUTES TO WICKFORD AND STANFORD-le-HOPE

In 1928, having been unsuccessful in obtaining licences to operate on Canvey Island despite establishing a depot there, Major Pearse expanded services from South Benfleet to Stanford-le-Hope via Vange and Pitsea and to Wickford via North Benfleet and Nevendon. Ironically, the route to Stanford-le-Hope duplicate route 2 introduced in 1922 by Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services in response to Pearce's service to Southend from South Benfleet via Tarpots Corner.



THUNDERSLEY, HADLEIGH AND DISTRICT WITHDRAWS SERVICES

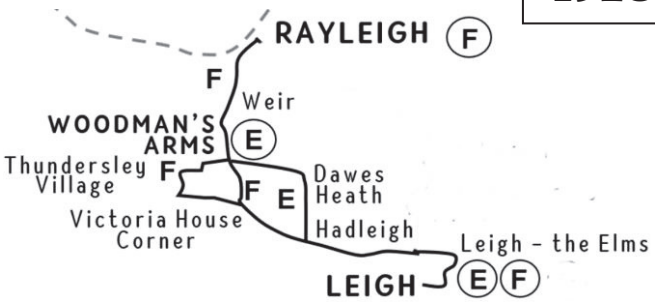
At the end of 1928, this operator ceased its services to Rayleigh via Thundersley, leaving just one service from Leigh to Hadleigh.



SERVICE "E" and "F"
LEIGH-on-SEA TO THUNDERSLEY AND RAYLEIGH

1928

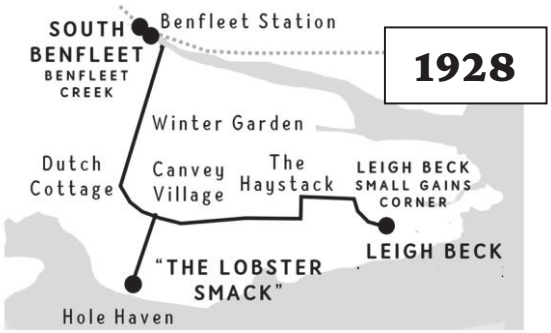
In 1928, to assist the traveling public, Edward Hall Motors, as a subsidiary of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, introduced service identifications for their routes. The service from Leigh-on-Sea to Rayleigh via Thundersley and Hadleigh became ***service F***. The service from Leigh Church to the "Woodman's Arms" via Daws Heath, became ***service E.***



CANVEY - SERVICES TO THE "LOBSTER SMACK"

1928

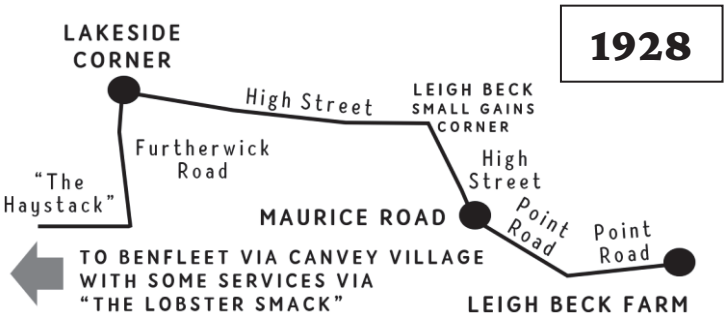
In 1928, some of the **Canvey Island Motor Association** services from Leigh Beck to Benfleet ran via the "Lobster Smack" at Hole Haven.



CANVEY - SERVICES EXTENDED FROM LAKESIDE TO MAURICE ROAD AND LEIGH BECK

1928

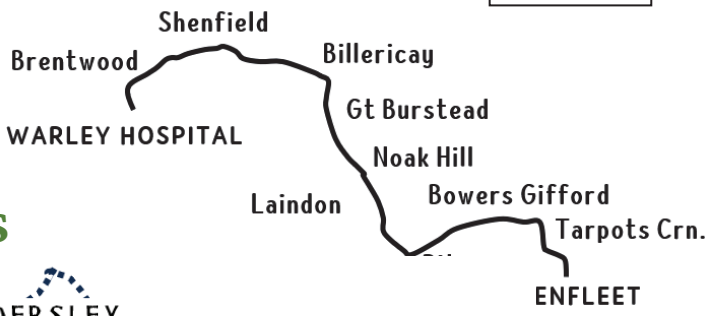
In 1928, the road from Small Gains Corner to Leigh Beck Farm was being reconstructed, so motor bus services were curtailed at Lakeside Corner. However, in June 1928, the Canvey Urban District Council approved a service from Lakeside Corner to Leigh Beck Farm and this was followed by approval for the Canvey Island Motor Drivers Association to operate a service from Lakeside Corner to Maurice Road at the junction with the High Street.



SOUTH BENFLEET TO WARLEY HOSPITAL

1929

In 1929, a "Sundays Only" service was introduced by **Pearce's Motor Services** to operate to the Essex County Mental Hospital at Warley from South Benfleet via Brentwood, Billericay, Laindon and Vange.



WESTCLIFF'S SERVICE 3A CEASES

Apart from an isolated journey, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services ceased the operation of their 3A service in June 1929, which was not profitable and duplicated that of Pearce's Motor Services.

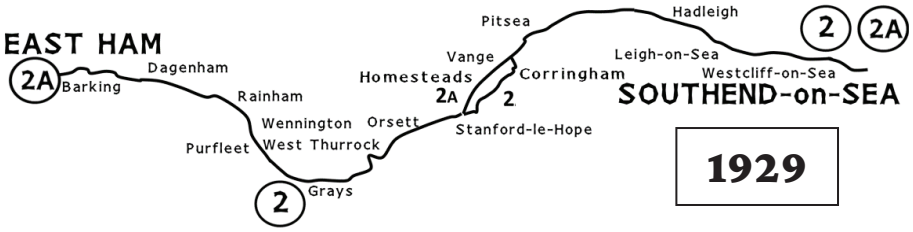
1929

CHANGES TO SERVICES FROM HADLEIGH

"The Blue Buses" of Edward Hall Motors ceased operating to Bramble Hall in 1929 as part of its Daws Heath service to the "Woodman's Arms".

SERVICES 2 AND 2A EXTENDED TO EAST HAM

In March 1929, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services extended their services 2 and 2A from Stanford-le-Hope to Grays, and service 2A was further extended in April 1929 from Grays to East am, via Averly, Wennington Village, Rainham and Barking.

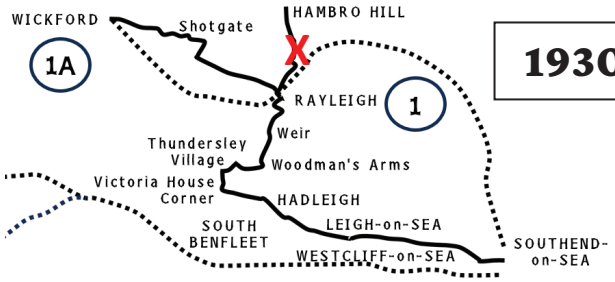


CANVEY AUXILERY MOTORS

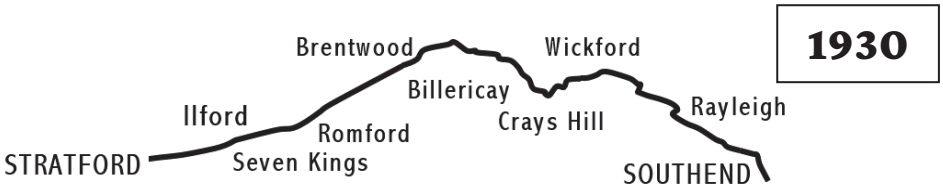
In March 1930, the Canvey Urban District Council encouraged the individual bus owners who operated under the name Canvey Island Motor Association to form a company, so **Canvey Auxiliary Motors Ltd**. was created on the 25th of July 1930.

ROUTE 1A SERVICE WITHDRAWN

In March 1930, the 1927 Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services route 1A extension of service 1 to Wickford was withdrawn.

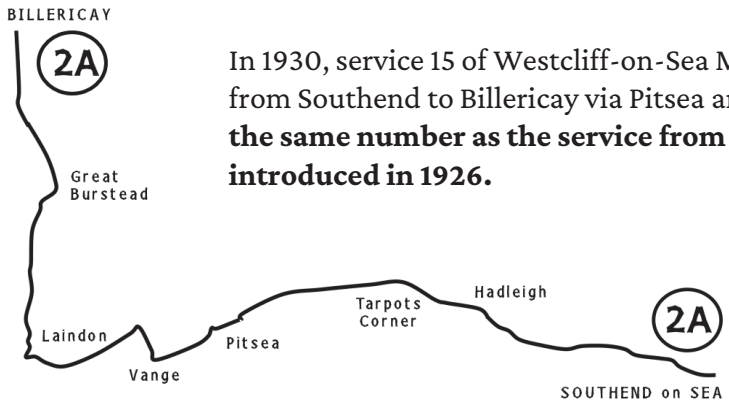


SERVICE 15 NO LONGER SERVICES HADLEIGH OR TARPOTS



In June 1930, the wholly owned subsidiary of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, Royal Red Pullman Saloons became the operator of service 15 which was re-routed via Rayleigh and Wickford, between Southend and Stratford Broadway (London)

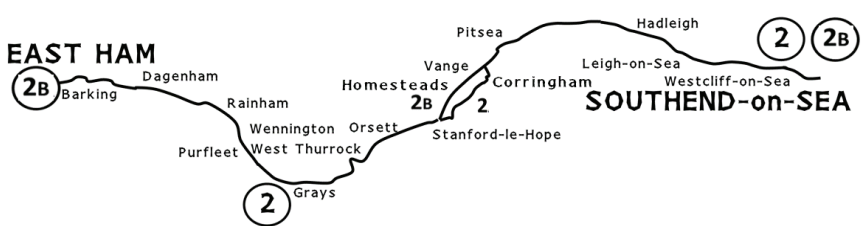
SERVICE 15 IS REPLACED BY NEW SERVICE 2A



In 1930, service 15 of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Servces was replaced by an hourly service from Southend to Billericay via Pitsea and Laindon, and was numbered 2A, **which was the same number as the service from Southend to Stanford-le-Hope via Homestead introduced in 1926.**

1930

JULY 31st, 1931 - SERVICE 2A RENUMBERED 2B



1931

ROAD TRAFFIC ACT 1930

The Road Traffic Act 1930 replaced the Local Governments role in regulating omnibus services with Traffic Commissioners (three traffic commissioners for each traffic area, with a Chairman of the Committee) regulated in 12 Traffic Areas in the UK. These Commissioners the routes and timetables of public transport operators in their area and had the power to force the coordination of services between operators. Licences would be issued to "established operators" as a priority above new operators unless the new operator would provide a service for the benefit of the public not currently provided.

AREA ROAD TRAFFIC COMMISSIONERS TAKE OVER LICENSING

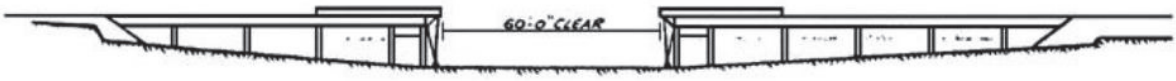
From 9th February 1931, as required by the Road Traffic Act 1930, all public service vehicle drivers, conductors, and the routes on which they worked, had to be licensed by the Area Road Traffic Commissioners.

BUS OPERATORS SERVING THE BENFLEET AREA IN 1931

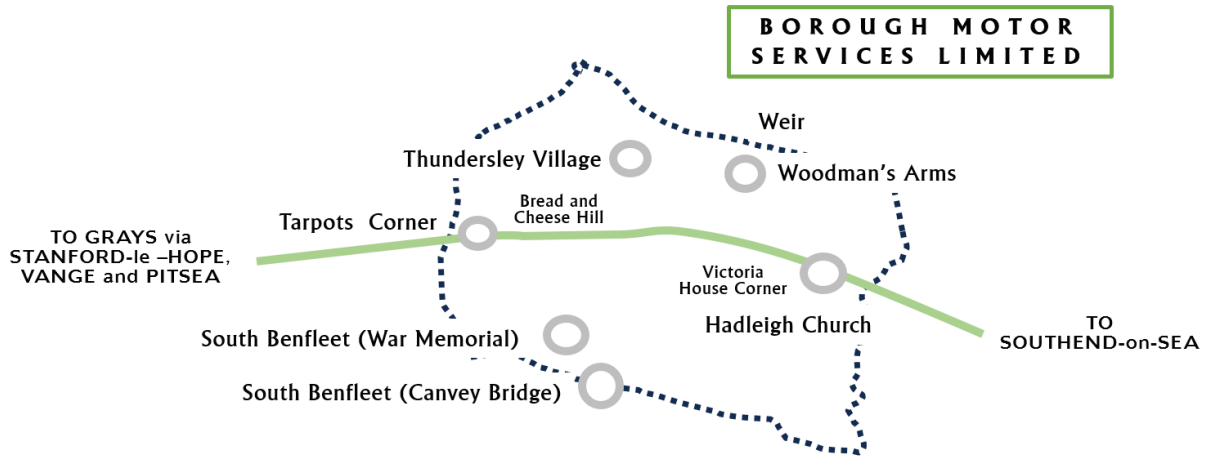
- Borough Motor Services
- Canvey Auxiliary Motors
- Pearce's Motor Services Ltd.
- Edward Hall Motors -"The Blue Buses", as a subsidiary of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services
- Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Motors
- Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services

21st MAY 1931 – THE CANVEY ISLAND BRIDGE

An opening bridge across Benfleet Creek inaugurated on the 21st of May 1931. The bridge was first considered in 1929, and at one stage, the Barking Town Urban District Council Light Railways bascule bridge across Barking Creek was considered when the councils tramway system closed in 1929. Canvey Bridge (known as the Colvin Bridge) may have been unique in the UK as it had two sliding "leaves" like an expandable dining room table that lifted then slid back across the roadway.

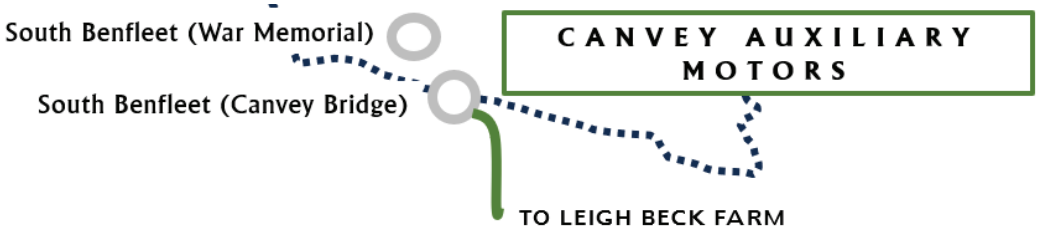


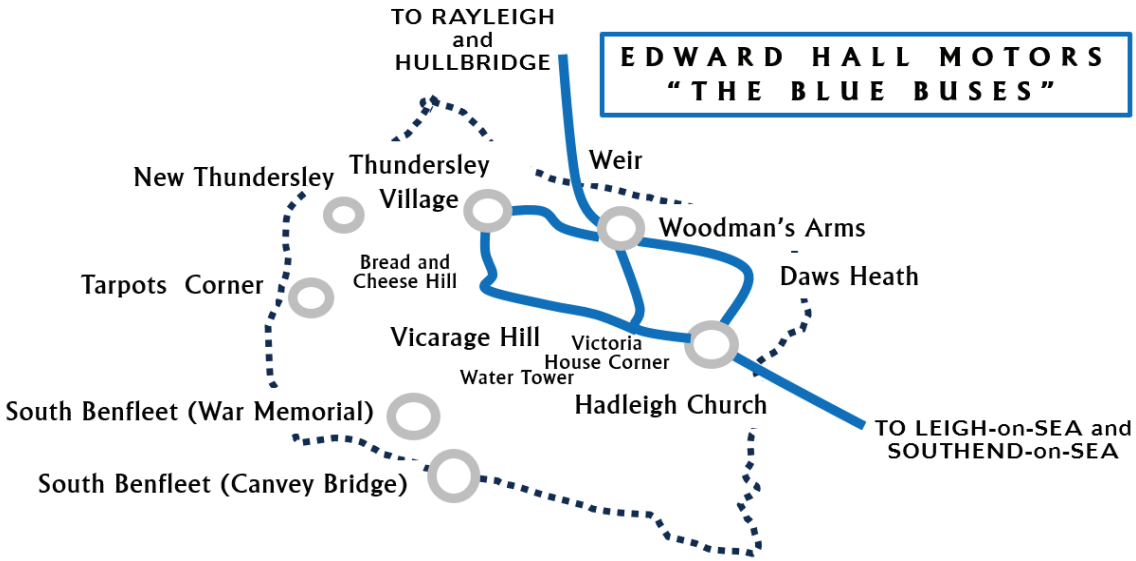
BUS OPERATORS SERVING THE BENFLEET AREA IN 1931

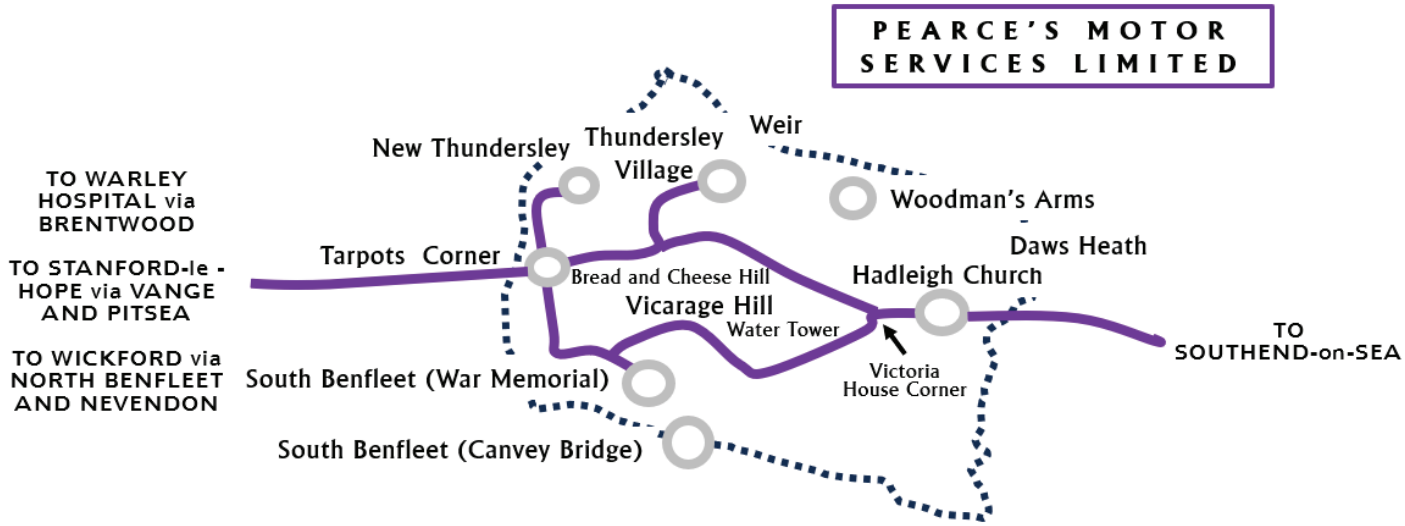


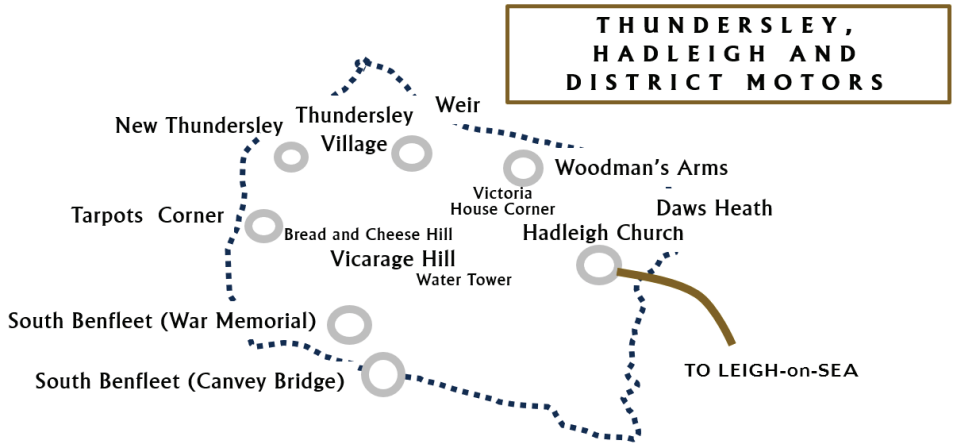
BUS OPERATORS SERVING THE BENFLEET AREA IN 1931

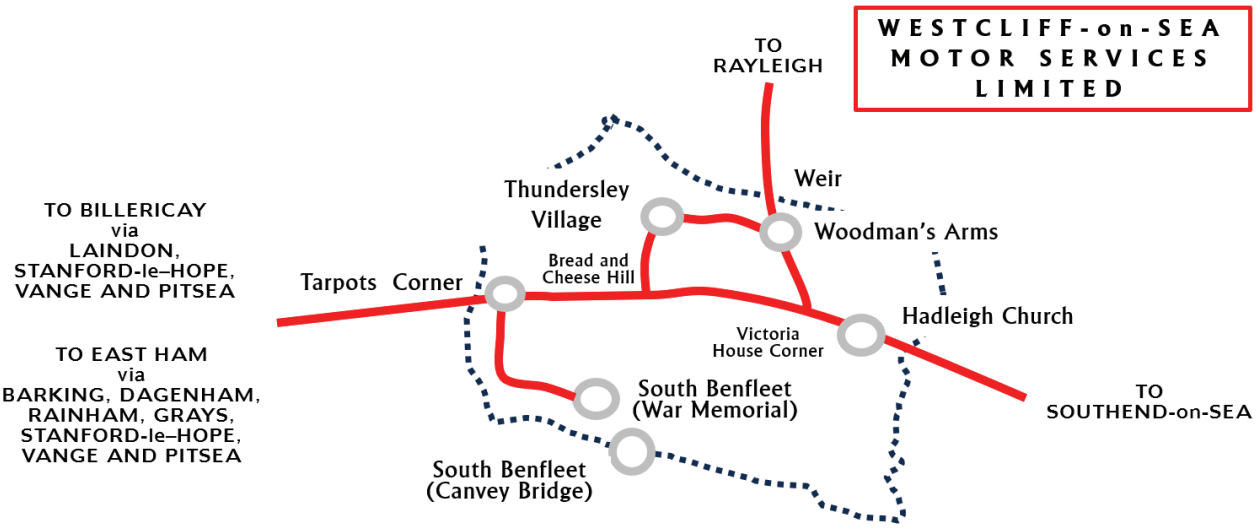
AFTER THE OPENING OF THE COLVIN BRIDGE TO CANVEY ISLAND





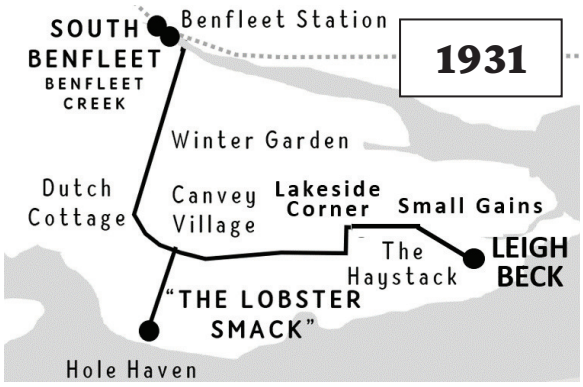






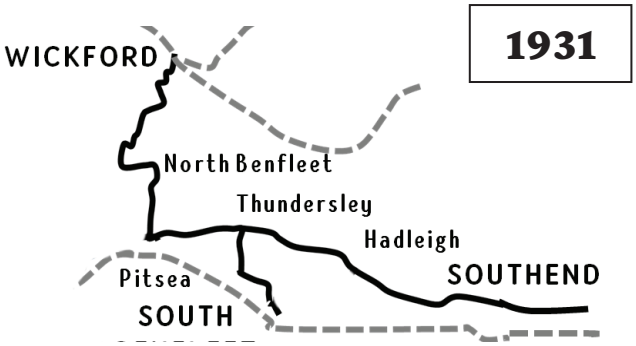
CANVEY AND DISTRICT MOTOR TRANSPORT SERVICES

The partners of the "Canvey Auxiliary Motors", decided their business would be best served if it became a limited company, so on the 29th of October 1931, Canvey and District Motor Transport Company Ltd. was formed to take over Canvey Auxiliary Motors.



PEARCE'S MOTOR SERVICES LICENCES NOT GRANTED

In 1931, the new Traffic Licensing Commissioner refused the licences for Pearce's Motor Services journeys to Vange and Stanford-le-Hope, to New Thundersley, to Thundersley Village and the Sunday service to Warley Mental Hospital were withdrawn. ***Although left without competition when Westcliff-on-Sea Motors Services ceased operating the ex "The Blue Buses" service 3A via Vicarage Hill in 1929, Pearce's Motor Services may have ceased operating their service "3A" before 1931.***



Remaining services licensed to Pearce's Motor Services by the Traffic Licensing Commissioner.

THOMAS TILLING -AN OMNIBUS PIONEER

In January 1850, Thomas Tilling purchased a horse bus together with the right to run four journeys a day between Peckham and Oxford Street, London. By 1914, the company looked outside London for growth, and Tilling started to seek new markets in the provinces. The Tilling family's association with the company ended in 1929 with the death of Richard Tilling. By 1928, the company known as Tilling Motor Services held an interest in 11 bus companies throughout the U.K.

1929 - EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS COMPANY FORMED

The Eastern National Omnibus Company commenced operating in 1929 as a joint venture between the London and North Eastern Railway, the London, Midland and Scottish Railway and the National Omnibus & Transport Company. This later company had originated in 1909 as the National Steam Car Company, operating steam bus

services in London. The London services ceased in 1919, when the company was renamed National Omnibus & Transport Company.

The company expanded outside London, first in Essex (1913), where the company bought the bus operations of the Great Eastern Railway around Chelmsford, and later in Bedfordshire (1919), Gloucestershire (1919), Somerset (1920), Dorset (1921), and Devon and Cornwall (1927). The National continued to expand in Essex, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. It was therefore an ideal "vehicle" for the railways to consider as a partnership towards omnibus shareholdings following the introduction of the Road Powers Act of 1928 which allowed railway companies to own and/or operate motor omnibus services either on their own behalf or in association or as a shareholding or agreement with a bus operator including private companies and local governments.

In 1929, Tilling Motor Services acquired a controlling interest in the National Omnibus and Transport Company, and in 1934, a majority shareholding in the Westcliff on Sea Motor Services. By 1956, the Eastern National Omnibus Company together with the Southend Corporation, held the monopoly of bus services in South East Essex.

TILLING TAKES OVER EASTERN NATIONAL

On the 7th of February 1931, Thomas Tilling Ltd. gained control of National Omnibus & Transport Company and therefore all its subsidiary companies, including the Eastern National Omnibus Company. **This later company would, by 1954, control all the bus companies serving the Benfleet area, as part of the British Transport Commission, through its Thomas Tilling subsidiary.**

SUMMER SERVICES ON CANVEY ISLAND

1932

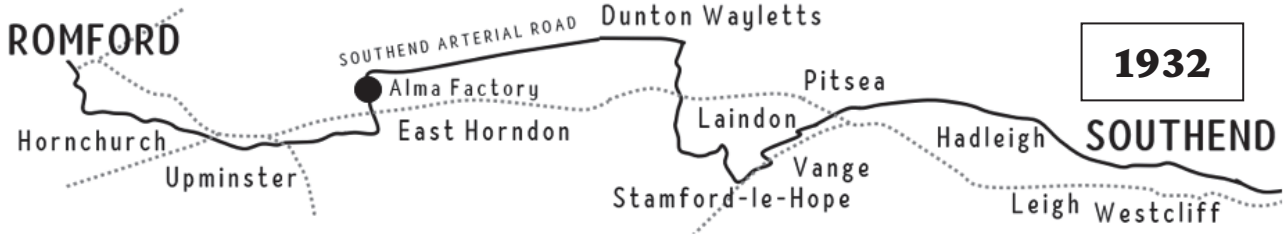
In 1932, the Canvey and District Motor Transport Company Ltd received approval from the Area Road Traffic Commissioner for the following summer services; -

- Canvey Village to Hole Haven (Lobster Smack)
- Canvey (Leigh Beck) to London (Finsbury Park) via the Southend Arterial Road. ***Sundays and Bank Holidays only - single service at 8.30 pm from Canvey one way – the bus returned empty to Canvey Island.***

SUNDAYS ONLY SERVICE

SERVICE 2A – ROMFORD SUBSTITUTED FOR BILLERICAY

In June 1932, service 2A of Westcliff-on-Sea Motors Services was re-routed from terminating at Billericay, to terminating at Romford Market Place via the Alma Factory, Corbet's Tey, Upminster and Hornchurch.



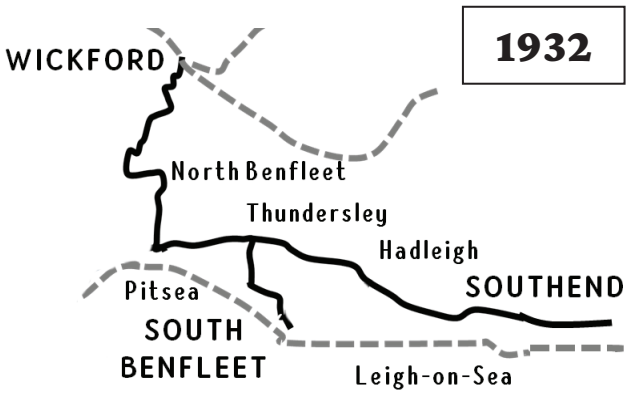
1932

SERVICE 3 – HALF HOUR FREQUENCY COMBINED TO GIVE A 15 MINUTE SERVICE BETWEEN BENFLEET AND SOUTHEND

In June 1932, Westcliff-on-Sea Motors Services increased the frequency of service 3 to every half an hour which required 3 buses to operate. Pearce's Motor Services Ltd, which also held a licence to operate the service 3, also decided to offer a half hourly frequency, so the combined frequency gave a service every 15 minutes between South Benfleet and Southend-on-Sea.

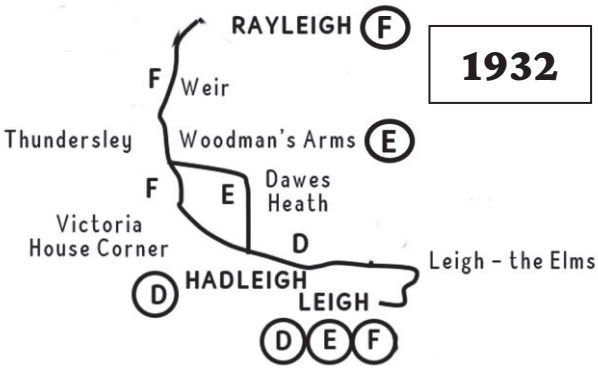
BENFLEET AND DISTRICT TAKES OVER PEARCE'S MOTORS

On the 29th of October 1932, H. R. Bridge, and his sons, had already resigned as directors from Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, and formed the Benfleet and District Motor Services Ltd. to take over Pearce's Motor Services Ltd and its licences. There were two services at the takeover, the route 3 service from South Benfleet to Southend – which were already co-ordinated with Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd - and a service to Wickford via North Benfleet which, from the 1st of January 1933, was reduced to "market day only" Monday service.



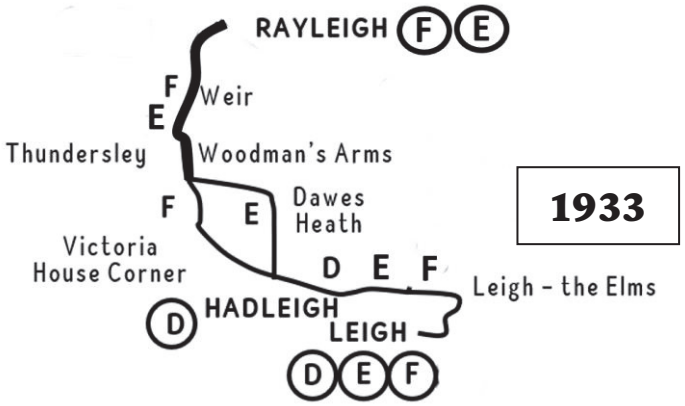
THUNDERSLEY AND HADLEIGH MOTOR SERVICES GETS A NEW OWNER

Towards the end of 1932, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd. obtained control of the Thundersley and Hadleigh Motor Services one route between Leigh Church and Hadleigh Church and was allocated service "D" as part of the lettering identification carried over from the acquisition of the "The Blue Buses" by the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd.



SERVICE "E" EXTENDED TO RAYLEIGH

In February 1933, ex "The Blue Buses" service "E" of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services Ltd, is extended from Woodman's Arms to Rayleigh.



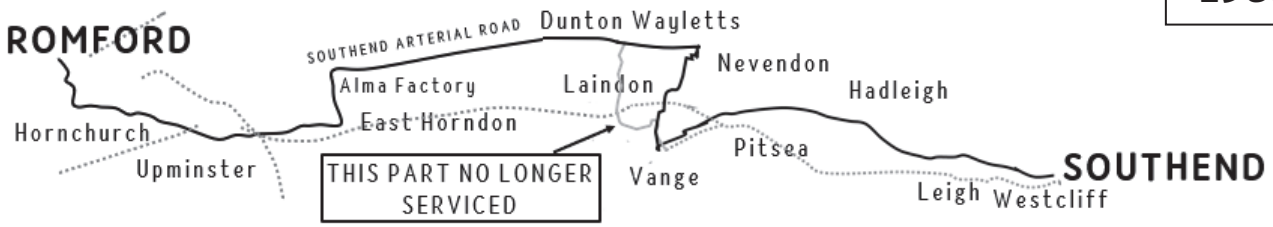
BOROUGH SERVICES SELL TO THE EASTERN NATIONAL OMNIBUS COMPANY

In May 1933, Eastern National obtained control of Borough Services Ltd. The Borough Services route from Southend to Grays was numbered "70" by Eastern National, but for licence restriction reasons, was still operated under the "Borough" fleet name.

CHANGES TO SERVICE 2A

Following the objections of the Billericay Rural District Council regarding the use of double-deckers, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services bus service 2A was re-routed in October 1933 to run via New Cricketers Inn at Nevendon on the Southend Arterial Road (A127) instead of Pipps Hill at Laindon.

1933



NEW BUSES FOR BENFLEET

In 1933, the newly formed Benfleet and District Motor Services Ltd. purchased three new double decker buses for their half hour timings on service 3 from South Benfleet to Southend-on-Sea, which it shared with Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services and provided a combined 15-minute frequency.

1933

CANVEY ISLAND BUS SERVICES IN 1933

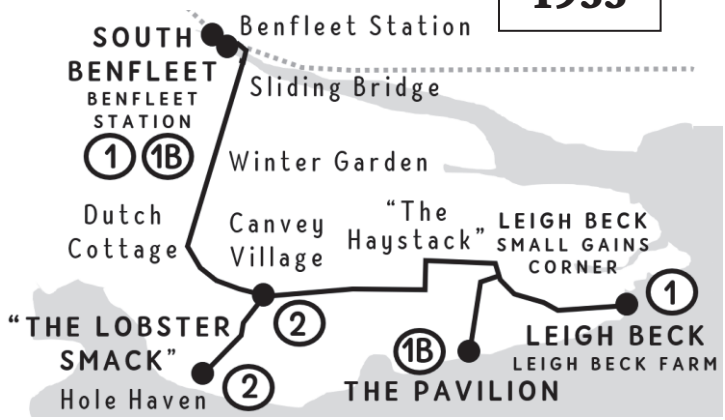
The Canvey and District Motor Transport Services Ltd operations for 1933 were -

1933

SERVICE 1 - Leigh Beck Farm to Benfleet (Benfleet Station) via "The Haystack" and Canvey Village.

SERVICE 1B – Canvey (Pavilion) to Benfleet (Benfl Station) via Maurice Road.

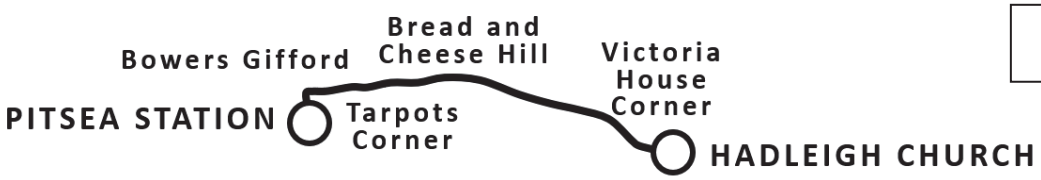
SERVICE 2 – Canvey Village to Hole Haven ("Lobst Smack").



A NEW OPERATOR PROVIDES A SERIVCE FROM PITSEA TO HADLEIGH

J.W. Campbell and Sons had been operating motor bus services in the Pitsea area since 1923, and in 1933, were granted a licence to operate a commuter service from Pitsea Station to Hadleigh Church via Bowers Gifford.

1933



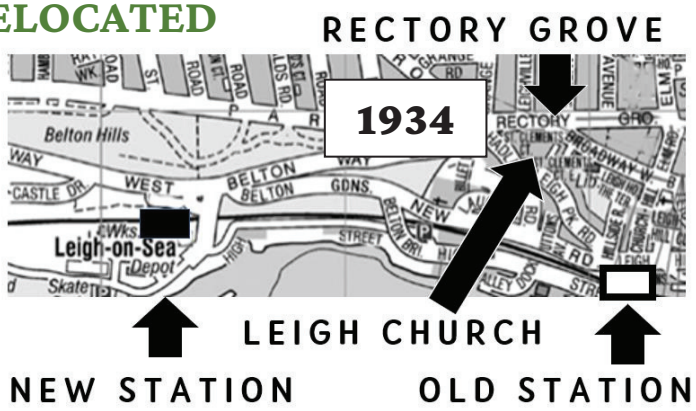
THE LONDON PASSENGER TRANSPORT BOARD – L.P.T.B.

The LPTB came into existence on the 1st of July 1933 and created a monopoly of transport services in London. In the "London Transport Special Area", services operated by the LPTB, did not need road service licences, and no person or undertaking could provide a public road service without written permission from the LPTB.

The LPTB could operate bus services outside the Special Area at several locations including Grays and Tilbury with the appropriate Road Traffic Licence granted by the Transport Commissioners.

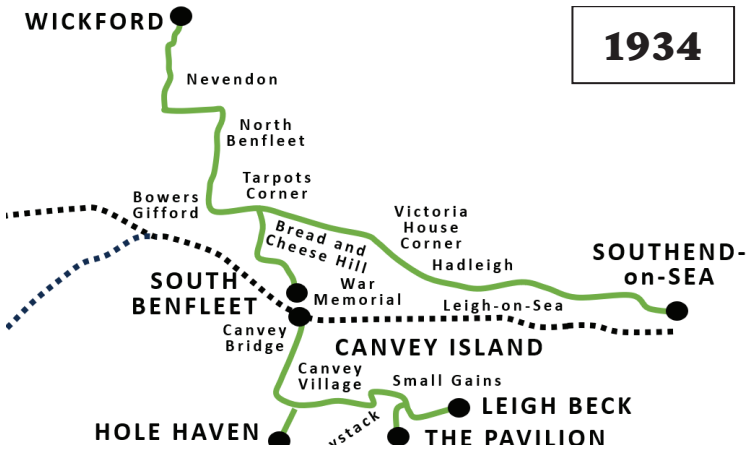
LEIGH-on-SEA L.M.S. STATION RELOCATED

On the 1st of January 1934, the London, Midland, and Scottish Railway (LMS) opened a new station at Leigh-on-Sea, some distance west of the original station, with Belton Way as a new road access. Services E, F and G were extended from Rectory Grove and Leigh Church to the new station as their terminus.



CANVEY AND DISTRICT MOTOR TRANSPORT SERVICES ARE TAKEN OVER BY THE BRIDGE FAMILY

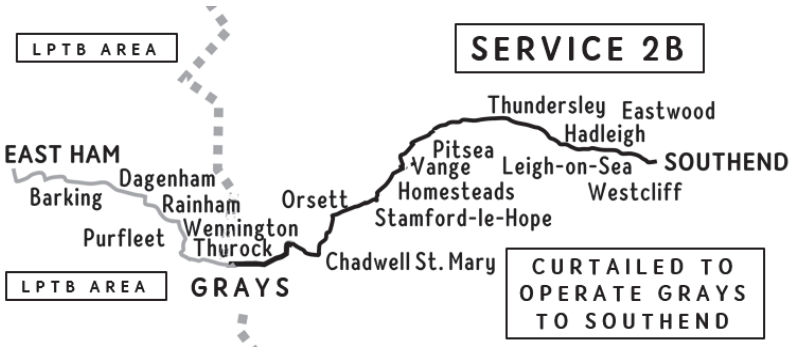
At the 1934 Annual General Meeting of the Canvey and District Motor Transport Services Ltd, H.R. Bridge announced he had secured controlling shares in the company and therefore became the Secretary and General Manager and his son, H. A. Bridge, also joined the board. H.R. Bridge was also the Secretary and General Manager of the Benfleet and District Motors Services Ltd.



The Bridge Family bus services

THE EFFECT OF THE L.P.T.B. EXCLUSIVE AREA ON SERVICES

The first impact of the creation of the London Passenger Transport Board (L.P.T.B.) on Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services was on the 13th of July 1934, when service 2B was withdrawn between East Ham and Grays. The L.P.T.B. paid £4000 in compensation to the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services for the loss of this part of the route.



CHANGES WITH SERVICES ON AND FROM CANVEY ISLAND

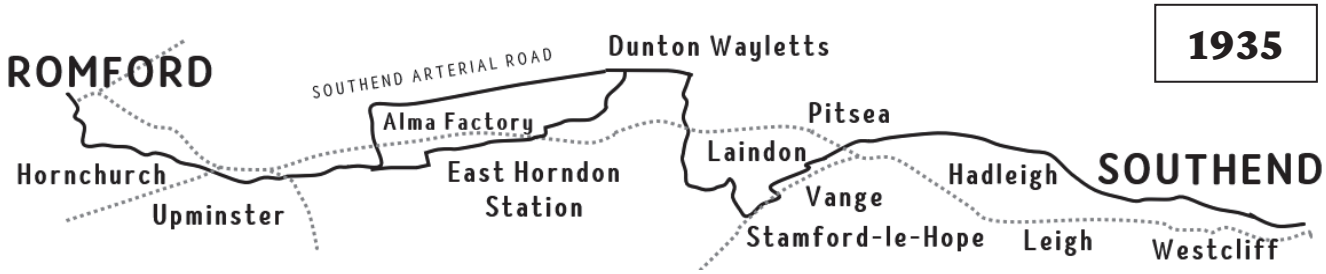
At the end of the Summer Season in 1934, the Sunday evening service to Holloway (it was curtailed from the original terminus at Finsbury Park) and the service to the Pavilion, **ceased to operate.**

TILLING GAINS CONTROL OF WESTCLIFF-on-SEA MOTOR SERVICES

In March 1935, a newspaper report advised that a "Mystery Buyer" of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services shares was Thomas Tilling Ltd, which, by March, had gained 90% of all shares. On the 1st of August 1935, Thomas Tilling Ltd, decided to liquidate **Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Services** and transferred the licences to the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services. ***Tilling now controlled the Eastern National Omnibus Company and Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services.***

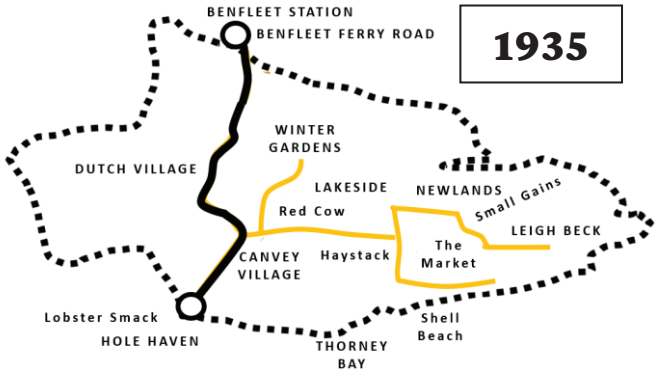
CHANGES TO SERVICE 2A

In May 1935, most Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services 2A service were diverted from the Homefields Garage and the Alma factory to run via East Horndon LMS railway station. (renamed West Horndon Station in 1947.)



DIRECT SERVICE BETWEEN BENFLEET AND THE "LOBSTER SMACK"

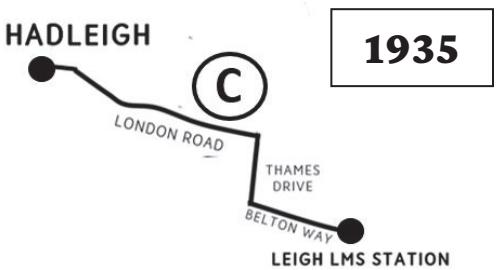
In 1935, the summer service to the 'Lobster Smack" at Hole Haven was operated again but directly from Benfleet Station. ***However, by 1937, the service resumed its original route from Canvey Village to the "Lobster Smack".***

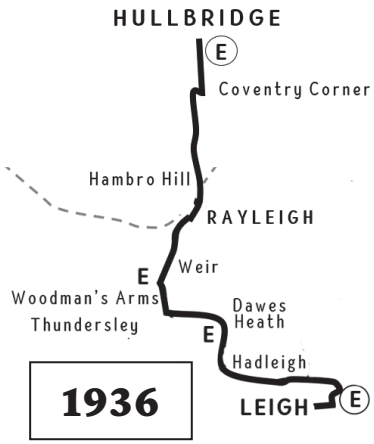


Although, only lasting two summer seasons, the direct route provided a regular service from the afternoons in both directions. The last bus at 10.45 pm from the "Lobster Smack" to Benfleet, arrived in time for the late train to London.

A NEW PEAK HOUR THUNDERSLEY, HADLEIGH AND DISTRICT SERVICE

In 1935, whilst still under Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services management, a new peak hour service was commenced by Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Services as service "C" – a between Hadleigh Church and Leigh Station via Thames Drive.



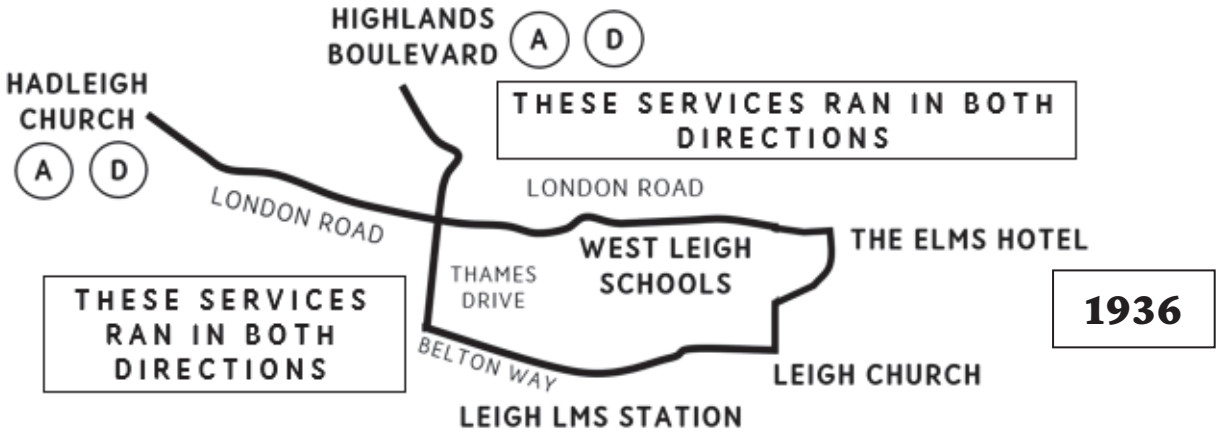


SERVICE "E" EXTENDED TO HULLBRIDGE

February 1936, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services extended service "E" from Leigh to Hullbridge via Hadleigh, Daws Heath, Woodman's Arms, the Weir, and Rayleigh.

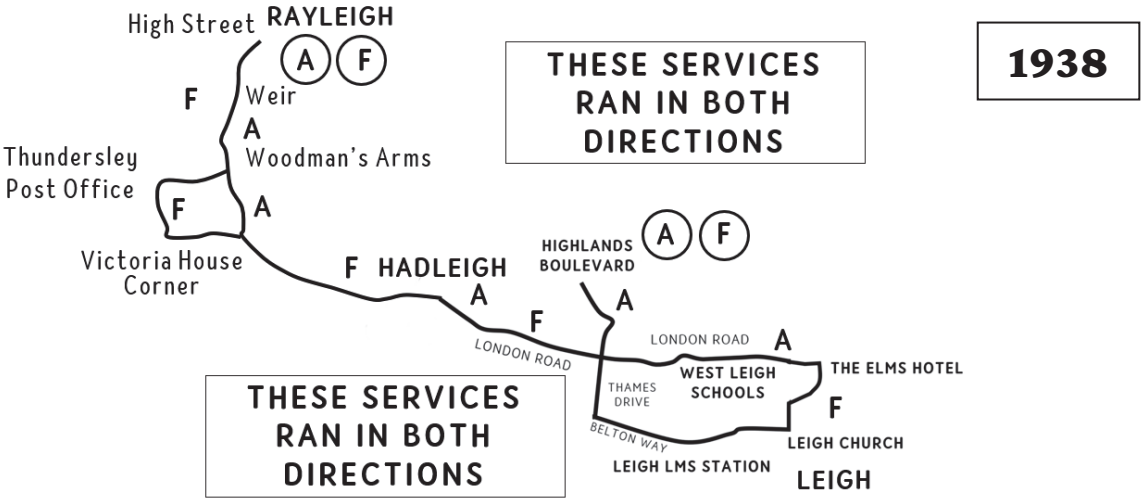
FORMER THUNDERSLEY, HADLEIGH AND DISTRICT SERVICES ARE LINKED

From August 1936, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services linked the former Thundersley, Hadleigh and District services A and D to operate Highlands Boulevard, Thames Drive, Leigh LMS station, Leigh Church, West Leigh Schools and Hadleigh Church.



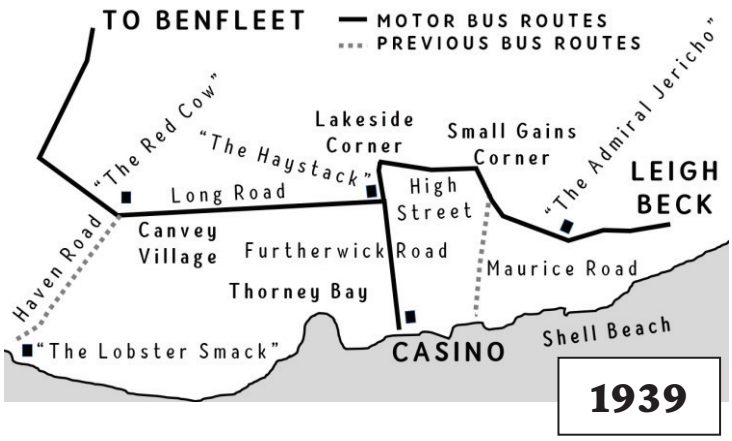
CHANGES BY WESTCLIFF TO EX "BLUE BUSES" SERVICES FROM LEIGH STATION TO RAYLEIGH VIA THUNDERSLEY

On the 5th of October 1938, Westcliff-on-Sea amended the ex "The Blue Buses" services in the Leigh, Hadleigh and Rayleigh area. Service D was discontinued and merged into the combined services of A and F to operate Highlands to Rayleigh via Thames Drive, Leigh Station, Leigh, Leigh Elms, Hadleigh Church and Thundersley – Woodcutters Arms and The Weir Hotel.



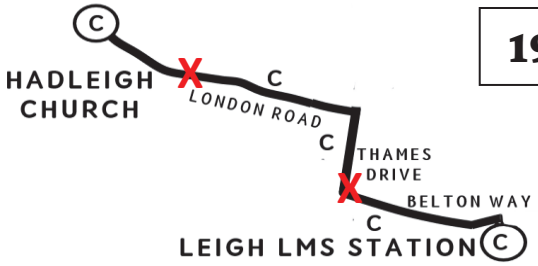
CANVEY SEA FRONT SERVICE NOW RUNS TO THE CASINO

In July 1939, the sea front service route was changed from Maurice Road to "The Haystack" via Furtherwick Road to the Casino. The Casino was an amusement park and fun fair developed in 1934.



SERVCE "C" IS WIHDRAWN

Introduced in 1935 by Thundersley, Hadleigh and District Services this peak hour service between Hadleigh Church and Leigh Station via Thames Drive was withdrawn completely in July 1940.



1940

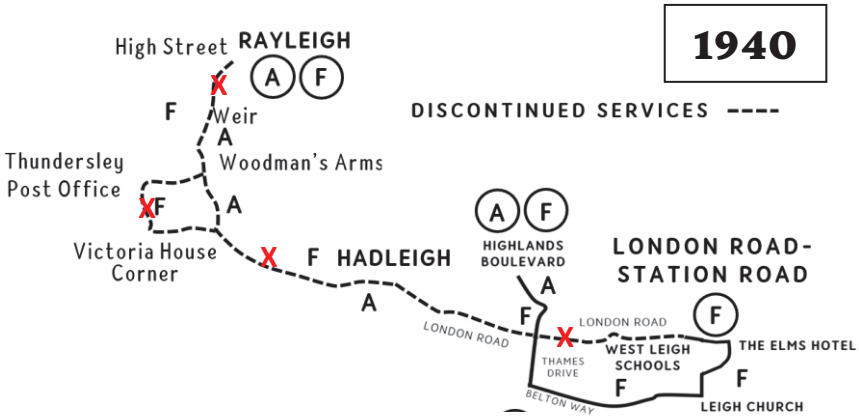
EX "THE BLUE BUSES" SERVICE CHANGES

In July 1940, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services ex "The Blue Buses" services A/F were amended. Service F ran from Highlands Boulevard to London Road, Leigh with the junction of Station Road via Thames Drive, Leigh L.M.S. Railway Station, and Leigh Church. The service to Rayleigh was curtailed but connections were made at London Road and Station Road with buses on service 1 to Rayleigh. Service A was allocated to peak hour only services between Highland Boulevard and Leigh L.M.S. Station.

SERVICE 70 NOW OPERATED BY EASTERN NATIONAL

Borough Motor Services was taken over by the Eastern National Omnibus Company in May 1933, but for licencing purposes, Borough still operated the service until the 30th October 1940, when Eastern National resumed the operation.

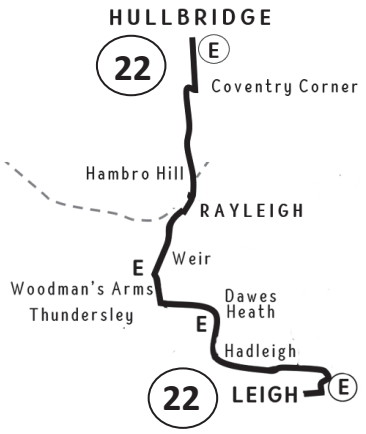
1940



1940

SERVICE "E" RECEIVES NUMBER 22

In August 1942, ex "The Blue Buses" service "E" became Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services 22.

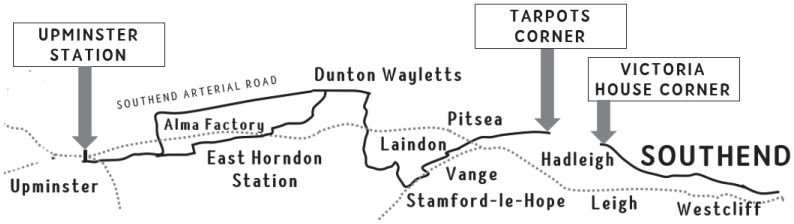


1942

THE 2A "LONG DISTANCE" SERVICES IS SPLIT

To encourage long distant travellers to use the railways where possible, on the 30th of September 1942, most of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services 2A journeys were split into 2 sections – Southend to Hadleigh Victoria House Corner and Tarpots to Upminster L.M.S. Station which was not on the original route. Some services did operate over the full Southend to Romford route for the benefit of workers. ***However, from the 6th of September 1944, the "gap" between Hadleigh Victoria House Corner and Tarpots Corner was reinstated.***

1942



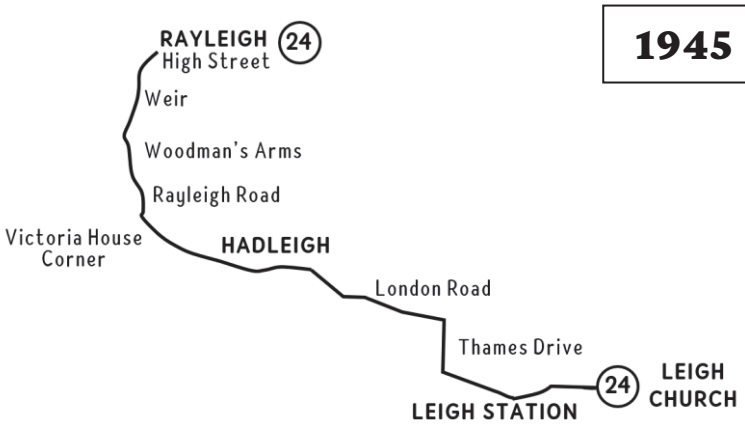
SERVICE "C" RE-INTRODUCED AS SERVICE 24

On the 29th of November 1944, service "C" was re-introduced as service 24 between Hadleigh Church and Leigh Station via Thames Drive.

1944

SERVICE 24 EXTENDED FROM LEIGH CHURCH TO RAYLEIGH

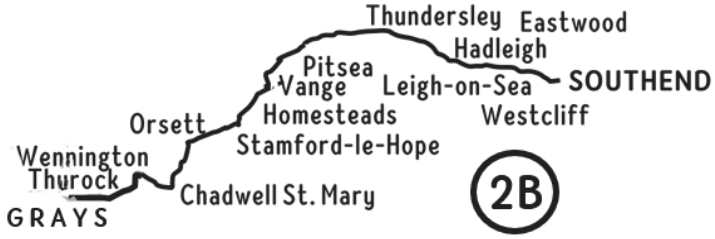
From the 20th of June 1945, service 24 of the Westcliff- on-Sea Motor Services was amended to run throughout the day from Leigh Church to Rayleigh via Leigh L.M.S. Station, Hadleigh Church, Victoria House Corner, Rayleigh Road, Woodman's Arms, and the Wier Hotel.

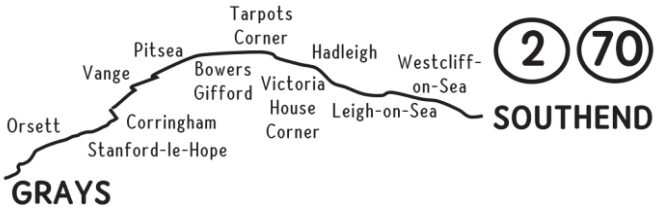


1945

SOUTHEND-GRAYS SERVICES CO-ORDINATED

In 1946, with the combination of three services operating between Southend and Grays (2, 2B and 70), a 15-minute frequency on weekdays was offered.





1946

THE TRANSPORT ACT 1947

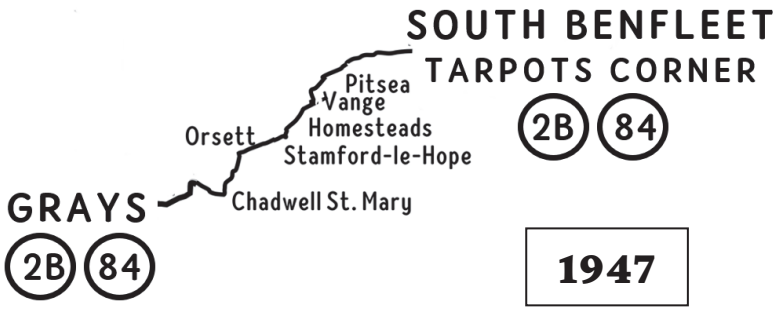
The Transport Act 1947 was industry changing legislation that became effective on the 1st of January 1948 and created the Government owned British Transport Commission, (B.T.C.)

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION

The Act provided for five Executives, covering Docks & Inland Waterways, Hotels, London Transport, Railways, and Road Transport.

SHORT WORKING OF SERVICE 2B AND NEW SERVICE 84

On the 18th of May 1947, a joint hourly service, numbered 84, was introduced jointly from South Benfleet Tarpots Corner to Grays by the Eastern National Omnibus Company and Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services. At the same time, service 2B offered a "Short Working" between Grays and "Tarpots Corner". ***Both the service 2B and service 70 still operated journeys from Grays to Southend-on-Sea.***



1947

TILLING SELLS TO THE BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION

Apart from the transfer of the railway holdings to the British Transport Commission, all of whom were almost bankrupt, there were no compulsory purchases made by the Commission. However, the Chairman of the Tilling Group decided there would be a better chance of obtaining the best terms for the Tilling shareholders through a voluntary sale to the BTC rather than a compulsory purchase. Therefore, negations between Tilling's and the BTC took place with a successful sale occurring to the BTC in 1948 with the take-over of all the Tilling holdings on the 1st of January 1949. ***Consequently, both the Eastern National Omnibus Company and the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services became "State Owned" on the 1st of January 1949.***

POST WAR SERVICES ON CANVEY ISLAND

Canvey's "Main Road" service operated throughout the Second World War ***but the summer service to the Casino did not recommence until 1948.***

POST WAR SUMMERS ON CANVEY ISLAND

Following the end of the Second World War, "Londoners" were keen to go on day trips as an outing from the blandness of post war London with its bomb sites and overcrowded housing. In East London, many families went to the nearest beach for the day, which was at Canvey Island as it was only 30 miles from Fenchurch Street station.

THORNEY BAY HOLIDAY CAMP

For those who wanted a week's holiday on the Island, Lieut.-Col. H. P. Fielder, T.D., a member of the Canvey Urban District Council, decided to build a holiday camp at Thorney Bay utilising a redundant Territorial Army camp which proved popular with between 7,000 and 8,000 people staying at the camp over the August holidays. Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services provided an infrequent service to the camp for the benefit of those holiday makers arriving by train at Benfleet Station. In fact, rail passenger traffic was so high, a "Sundays Only" train commenced from Benfleet Station to London stations at 9.13 pm and by 1961, there were 3 Sunday trains commencing at Benfleet for stations in London in addition to the normal timetable.

BENFLEET AND DISTRICT AND CANVEY AND DISTRICT SOLD TO THE B.T.C.

On the 2nd of March 1951, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services took over the family operations of Benfleet and District Motor Services and the Canvey Motor Transport Company. The family had sold their businesses to the British Transport Commission (B.T.C.) which allocated the operations to the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services, which already operated the route 3 service from South Benfleet to Southend so the Benfleet and District Motor Services timings on their service 3 were incorporated into Westcliff's.

The B.T.C. paid the Bridge family £127,500. for both companies, equivalent to £2.8 million in 2020. The price included two 1930's built "Art Deco" style garages, one at Hadleigh (Victoria House Corner) and one at Canvey, Leigh Beck Farm and 31 double decker buses.

THE SURPRISING NUMBER OF BUSES

For such a small operation with just two main routes, the Benfleet and District and Canvey and District fleets at B.T.C. takeover was quite extensive, which indicates the number of additional buses required for relief services on the route 3 from South Benfleet to Southend, and the seasonal extra buses required in the summer months on Canvey Island. Ten buses transferred were Daimlers build in 1945-46 and were new to the Bridge family, whilst 14 were ex Birmingham Corporation Daimlers build in 1943-45 with utility high bridge bodies.

INTENSIVE SUMMER BUS SERVICES ON CANVEY ISLAND

During the early days of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services operations on Canvey Island, the demand for buses in the summer months of the early 1950's, lead to an intensive service with some frequencies as short as every 5 minutes.

The buses Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services inherited from the Canvey and District Motor Transport Company, had no side destination blinds, so when several buses were "backed into" the loading bays at the Canvey Bridge terminus at Ferry Road, near Benfleet Station, wooden boards were used to indicate the destination. The boards had no "holders"- they just rested on the back of the longitude seat over the wheel arch in the window beside the rear entrance.

NEW ROUTES 26, 26A, AND 27

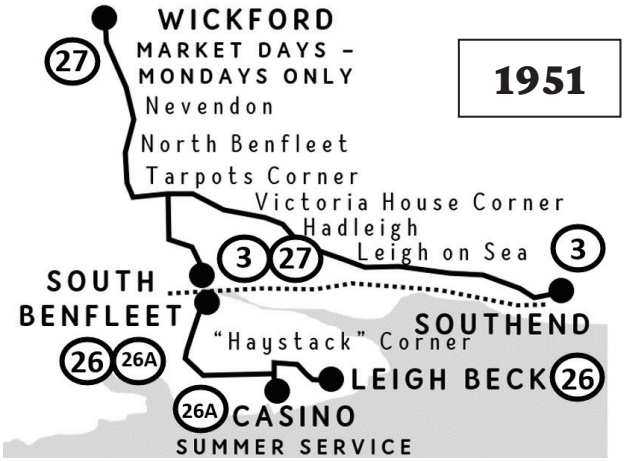
On the takeover of the Bridge's Family bus services, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services allocated the following service numbers to the Benfleet and Canvey routes; -

3 – existing Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services

26 – South Benfleet (Canvey Bridge) to Canvey (Leigh Beck Farm) via "The Haystack".

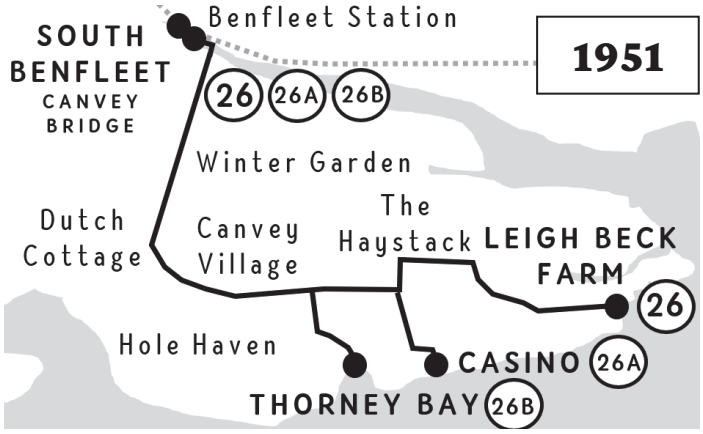
26A – South Benfleet (Canvey Bridge) to Canvey (Casino)- summer service- run as demand required.

27 – South Benfleet (War Memorial) to Wickford via North Benfleet and Nevendon (Mondays – Market Days only)



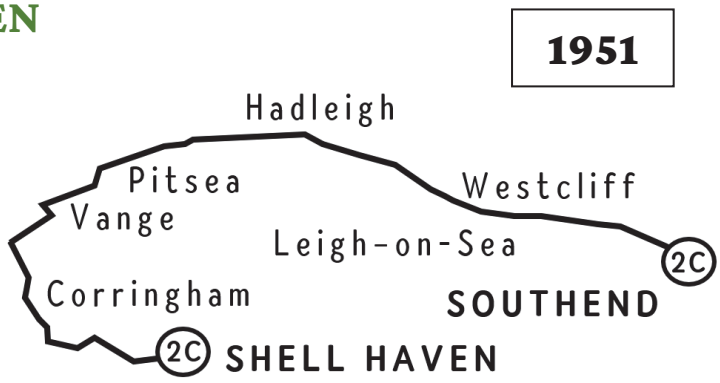
NEW SUMMER SERVICE ON CANVEY ISLAND

In mid-1951, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services introduced a summer infrequent weekend service on Canvey Island as service 26B between South Benfleet (Canvey Bridge) to the Thorney Bay Holiday Camp.



NEW SERVICE TO SHELL HAVEN

Developments of oil refineries on the north shores of the Thames Estuary and the River Thames commenced in the early post war period and the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services extended some journeys on route 2 to Shell Haven – the location of the refineries. On the 30th of September 1951, a new service commenced as 2C to operate form Southend to Shell Haven.



RE-DISTRIBUTION OF OPERATIONS

One of the roles of the British Transport Commission (B.T.C.), was the efficient management of the bus companies owned by the B.T.C. and they did this by delegating their responsibilities to the B.T.C. Road Transport Executive.

Since its establishment in 1948, the Road Transport Executive focused on the efficiently of the bus services and this involved ensuring the "geographic territories" of the B.T.C. owned bus companies were able to provide efficient operations.

Consequently, several changes were made to the "boundaries" of the bus operators including the in 1952, the transfer of the Eastern National eastern section to United Counties as it was more logical to have a head office at Northampton for the Northamptonshire area rather than Chelmsford which was Eastern National's Head Office.

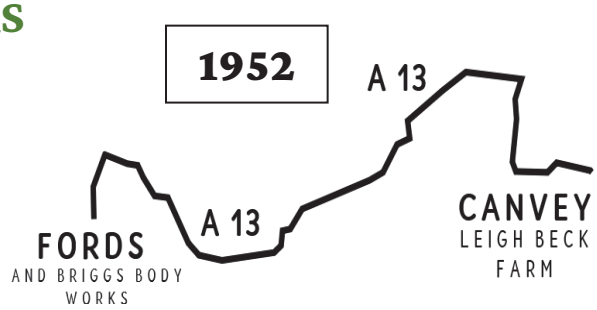
In 1951, the Eastern National services in the Grays area were re-arranged with services operated by the London Passenger Transport Board (L.P.T.B.) and this "re-organisation" allowed for "cross town services" which were severed when the L.P.T.B. was established in 1933 and the London Transport Area boundary split Grays in two between the L.P.T.B services and Eastern National services.

EASTERN NATIONAL TAKES OVER WESTCLIFF

With the loss of its Eastern Area and the 250 buses that were transferred to United Counties Omnibus Company Ltd., Eastern National was "compensated" by the Road Transport Executive with the transfer of the whole of the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services company on the 18th of May 1952, and from that date, all buses were delivered in "Tilling Green and Cream" with a "Westcliff" fleet name and a re-painting programme was immediately introduced for existing vehicles to replace the "Tilling Red and Cream" livery.. The last "Westcliff" timetable was June 1952.

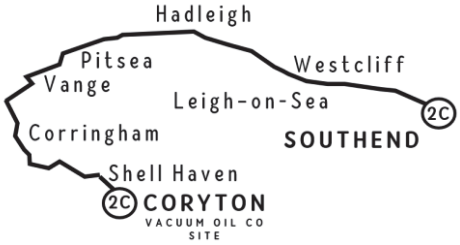
SPECIAL SERVICE FOR FORD WORKERS

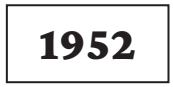
In July 1952, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services received a licence to operate a works service from Canvey Leigh Beck to Dagenham Fords factory and the Briggs Moor Bodyworks via the A13 trunk road, restricted to employers of both these businesses only.



SERVICE 2C EXTENDED

Also, in July 1952, Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services route 2C was extended to the Vacuum Oil Company site at Coryton.



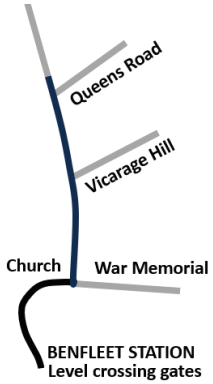


SUMMER SERVICES INCREASE ON CANVEY ISLAND

In April 1955, the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services increased the frequency of summer Sunday services to every 20 minutes for service 26 and every 30 minutes for service 26A. Extra services were operated as required.

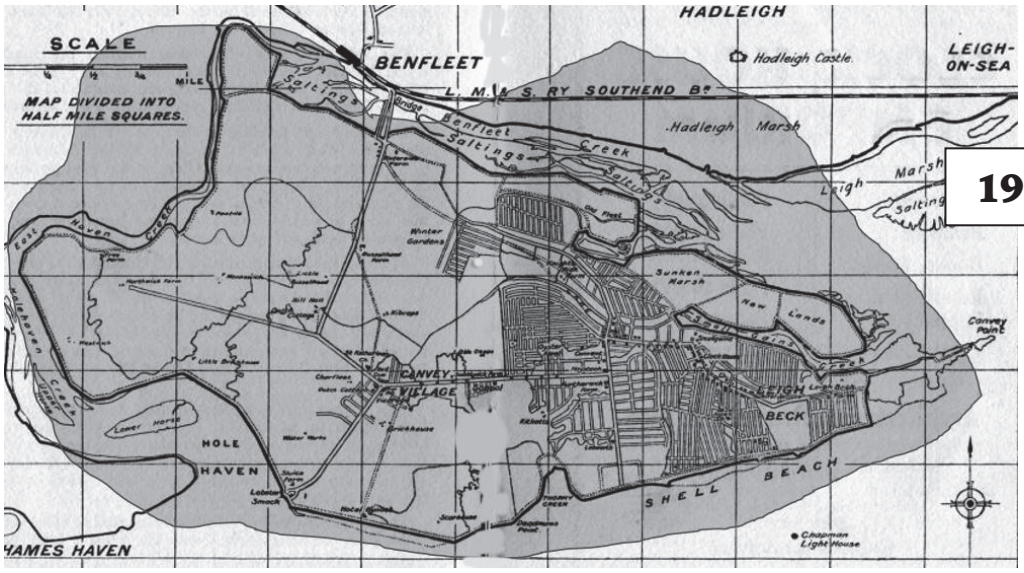
THE HALF MILE TAIL BACKS

The growing private car ownership in the mid 1950's, saw weekend tailbacks of half a mile in Benfleet High Road and in Long Road, Canvey due to the bottleneck caused by the railway level crossing gates at Benfleet Station frequently opening and the opening of Canvey Bridge. On Canvey, the buses "jumped the queue" by driving on the right-hand side of the road when there was a "tailback".



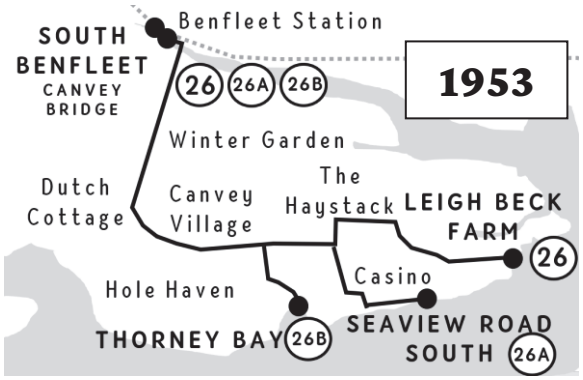
EAST COAST FLOODS

On the night of the 31st of January 1953, a combination of an extremely low-pressure system in the North Sea combined with a spring tide resulted in the East Coast Floods. Canvey Island was inundated, its land being below sea level, and despite being on an embankment, part of the London to Southend railway line between Leigh-on-Sea and Benfleet, was flooded. Eastern National as Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services and Southend Corporation Transport played a major effort in evacuating the 13,000 survivors and running a rail replacement service between Leigh and Benfleet. In recognition of the work of the volunteers, WVS and army personal during the Floods, the "Red Cow" at Canvey Village was renamed "The King Canute".



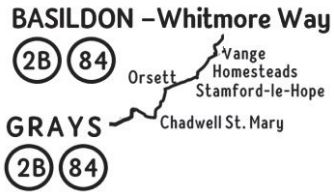
SERVICE 26A BECOMES A DAILY SERVICE

From the 19th of April 1953, service 26A was extended from the Casino to Seaview Road South via Eastern Esplanade and operated daily.



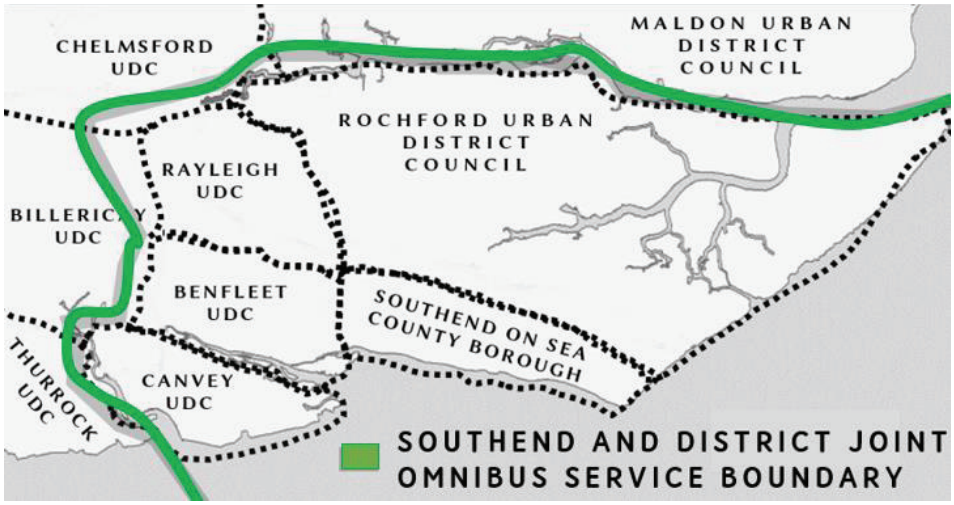
SERVICE 2B AND 84 CHANGES

From the 23rd of August 1953, the hourly 2B short working journeys between Tarpots Corner and Grays was amended to run from Basildon (Whitmore Way) and service 84 was amended to follow this route.



DATE SET FOR SOUTHEND AND DISTRICT CO-ORDINATION

After years of negotiations, the Southend County Borough Council approved the establishment of a Joint co-ordination agreement with the Eastern National Omnibus Company, which had absorbed all bus operators in the co-ordination area except J. W. Campbell and Sons which ran service 6, for the benefit of commuters, between Pitsea Station and Hadleigh. The target date set for the commencement of the agreement was the 1st of April 1954, and in January 1954, licenses were sought by "Westcliff" and the Corporation for each other's routes in the geographic area of the agreement. The area followed the River Crouch from the Thames Estuary to Battlesbridge then south to include Rettendon (Turnpike), Rawreth (Carpenters Arms), Great Tarpots (Tarpots Corner) and then down the Canvey Island boundary at Hole Haven Creek and the River Thames. ***Please see map next page.***



SOUTHEND AND DISTRICT JOINT SERVICES - COORDINATION COMMENCES IN 1955

The co-ordination agreement became effective on January 2nd, 1955 - the day after the assets of Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services had been transferred to the Eastern National Omnibus Company- all Easten National and Southend Corporation bus services being marketed as 'Southend & District Joint Services' thereafter.

OPERATOR TRANSFERS – SERVICE 1

It was decided to “equalise” the “milage” of the Joint Service, and some of the longer Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services would be transferred to the Corporation and the shorter services transferred to Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services. In the Benfleet area, service 1 would be operated by Southend Corporation Transport.

EXPRESS SERVICES

Although these services never stopped In the Benfleet Area it is worth recording that the Westcliff-on-Sea Motor Services timetable of June 1951 showed a service 70 journey operating on Mondays to Saturdays departing Southend Victoria Circus at 5.40 am running non-stop to Stanford-le-Hop arriving at 6.28 am where it terminated.

The 25th of September 1955 combined Eastern National and Westcliff-on Sea Motor Services timetable shows a journey on Sundays only from Southend Victoria Circus to Pitsea – Station Lane, commencing at 4.30 am and arriving at 5.09 am. The service returns at 6.35 am to Southend arriving at 7.14 am. No reason is known for this Sunday only service particularly as the 2C service is designed to convey refinery workers to Shell Haven.

1955 SOUTHEND & DISTRICT JOINT SERVICES TIMETABLE

SOUTHEND AND DISTRICT JOINT SERVICE TIMETABLE – 25th SEPTEMBER 1955 – BENFLEET AREA

1.- Southend (Victoria Circus) to Rayleigh (High Street) via Hadleigh and Thundersley Village.

2- Southend (Victoria Circus) to Grays via Hadleigh, Pitsea, Vange, Corringham, and Stamford-le-Hope.

2A - Southend (Victoria Circus) to Romford (Market Square) via Hadleigh, Pitsea, Laindon, West Horndon and Upminster.

2B - Southend (Victoria Circus) to Grays via Hadleigh, Pitsea, Vange, Homesteads, and Stamford-le-Hope

2C- Southend (Victoria Circus) to Shellhaven and Coryton (Vacuum Oil Company) via Hadleigh, Pitsea, Vange and Corringham.

3 - Southend (Victoria Circus) to South Benfleet (War Memorial) via Leigh Elms, Hadleigh, Thundersley (Kenneth Road) and Tarots Corner.

22- Leigh Church to Hullbridge via Hadleigh, Dawes Heath, Rayleigh Wier, Rayleigh Station and Hambro Hill

24 - Leigh Church to Hullbridge via Hadleigh, Victoria House Corner, Thundersley (Woodcutters Arms) , Rayleigh Wier, Rayleigh Station and Hambro Hill.

26 South Benfleet (Canvey Bridge to Canvey (Leigh Beck Farm) via Long Road, Canvey Village (King Canute), Canvey (The Haystack) and Canvey (Admiral Jericho)

26A South Benfleet (Canvey Bridge to Canvey (Eastern Esplanade-Seaview Road South) via Long Road, Canvey Village (King Canute), Canvey (The Haystack) and the Casino.

27 – South Benfleet (War Memorial) to Wickford (White Swan) via Tarpots Corner, Bowers Gifford (Pound Lane), North Benfleet, and Basildon (Southend Arterial Road).

J. W. Campbell and Sons - **service 6** for commuters, from Hadleigh Church to Pitsea Station.

POST 1955

1956 – J. W. Campbell and Sons of Pitsea, the last private operator to serve the Benfleet area, was sold to the British Transport Commission and was handed to Eastern National Omnibus Company (E.N.O.C.) for operation and management purposes. The service 6 for commuters, from Hadleigh Church to Pitsea Station, was re-number as service 235 by the E.N.O.C.

1958 – Southend Corporation buses operate the route 3 service.

1962 – On the 29th of January 1962, The Benfleet Station Underpass was opened which replaced the railway level crossing at Benfleet Station and allowed bus services to run directly from Canvey Island to Southend and subsequently to Basildon, Romford and Shoeburyness

1963 – Eastern National was included in the transfer of the British Transport Commission's transport assets to the state-owned Transport Holding Company, which in turn passed to the state-owned National Bus Company on 1st of January 1969.

1974 - Southend Corporation Transport, was renamed Southend Transport.

1986 – Following the introduction of the 1985 Transport Act, which required Local Governments to be at "arm's length" with their transport operations, Southend Transport became a limited company on 26 October 1986.

1987 – In January 1987, the National Bus Company, as part of the "Privatization Policy" sold Eastern National to its management as a "Management Buyout".

1990 – Eastern National passes to Bagerline.

1993 - Southend Transport was sold by Southend Borough Council to the British Bus group in June 1993.

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MAP OF SERVICES IN THE BENFLEET AREA - 1951